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Volunteer Leadership Series

Florette White Pomeroy

THE CARING SPIRIT:
CALIFORNIA SOCIAL WELFARE ISSUES
1932-1982

With an Introduction by
Sanford Treguboff

Interviews Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris
1982

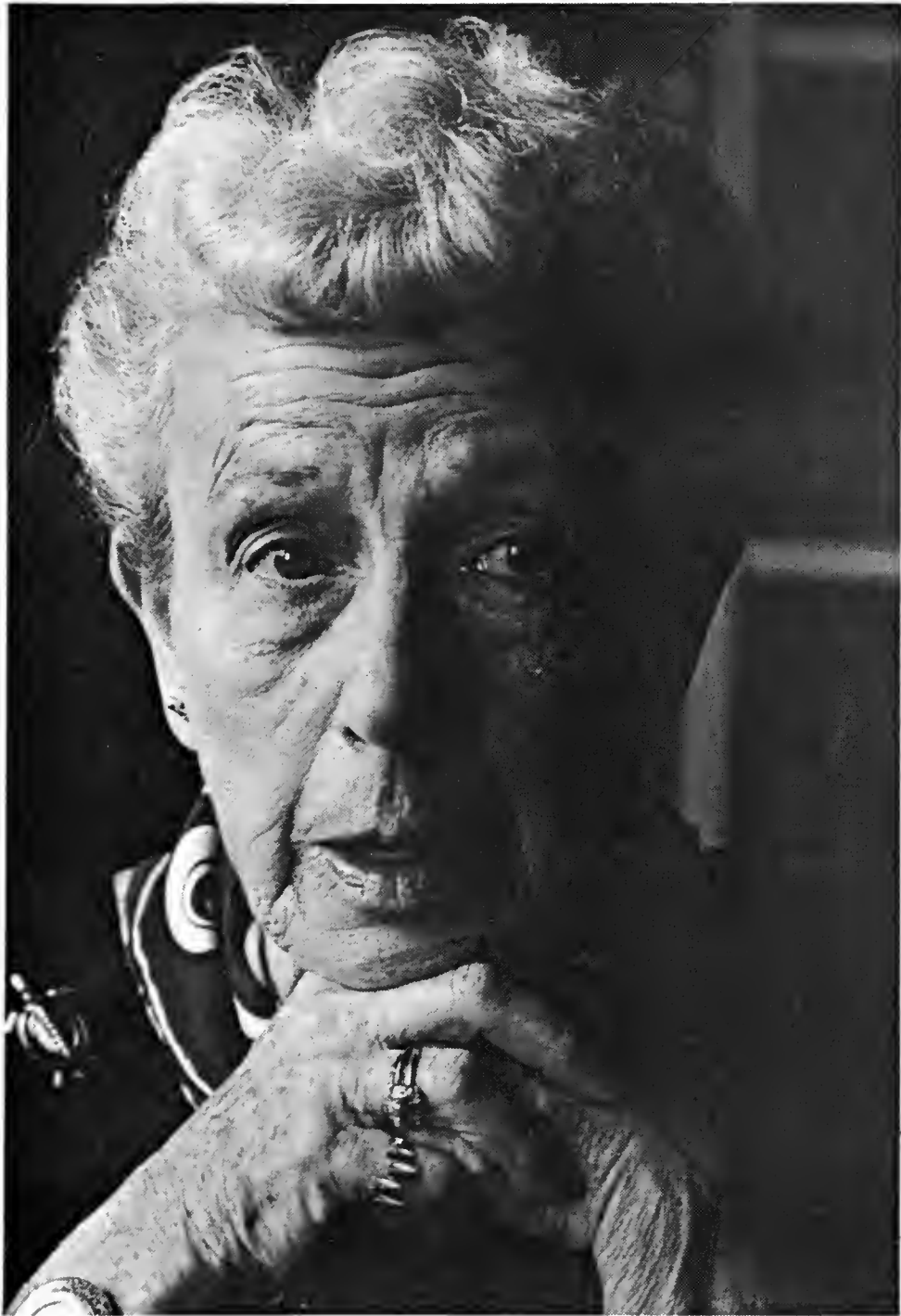
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FLORETTE WHITE POMEROY

ca. 1980

Photo by Emme Gilman



Florette White Pomeroy

September 10, 1910 - June 29, 1987

She has ceased to walk among us, but in her passing we honor Florette's spirit, her values, and her courage. No one has served more generously, or with greater understanding and compassion, her community and its people. While she will not be physically with us, her teachings, her capacity to unify, and her perseverance will be sustained.

As we pay tribute to her life and its significance, we might be able to hear her rich and commanding voice say:
"All right now...go forth and serve."

The Florette Pomeroy House

The Florette Pomeroy House is the first residential treatment center in California designed to help alcoholic women and their children recover together. Operating as part of the Womens Alcoholism Center's comprehensive program, it has served as a model for the development of other such non-profit programs nationwide.

The family requests that those wishing to honor Florette's memory kindly make donations to the Florette Pomeroy House, care of the Women's Alcoholism Center,
2261 Bryant Street,
San Francisco, California 94110.

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PREFACE

The Volunteer Leadership Series was established in 1977 as an ongoing project of the Regional Oral History Office. It is designed to document the accomplishments of selected Bay Area men and women who have worked through nonprofit organizations to improve the quality of life in their communities. Interviews with both lay and professional leaders provide rich resource material for greater understanding of the nature and impact of volunteer activity.

This project, in a sense, began with the Bay Area Foundation History Series, completed in 1976, which offers further data on significant aspects of the nonprofit world. From that series and other projects recorded by this Office, it was clear that many persons interviewed about their business and professional careers had spent equal time and effort over the years on their civic activities.

The present series of interviews studies the origins of individuals' interest in and dedication to voluntary endeavors and the processes by which private, nonprofit groups, frequently defined as a third sector with government and business in American society, bring about change in a community's social and cultural institutions. Thus the focus of the interviews is twofold: discussion of the personal background and principles of memoirists, and reflections on the founding and internal workings of specific volunteer organizations and external issues they have faced.

Individual interviews in the series have been funded by the UC Berkeley Foundation, the Chancellor's office, Friends of The Bancroft Library, the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, and colleagues and friends of specific memoirists.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape-record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of the Bancroft Library.

Gabrielle Morris, Director
Volunteer Leadership Oral
History Series

Willa K. Baum, Division Head
Regional Oral History Office

May 1984
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- Eleanor Richards Lyon, Civic Volunteer, Clubwoman, and Conservationist. 1976, 163 p.
- Emma Moffat McLaughlin, A Life in Community Service. 1970, 444 p.
- Florette Pomeroy, The Caring Spirit: California Social Welfare Issues, 1932-1982. 1984, 383 p.
- Carol Rhodes Sibley, Building the Community Trust: Berkeley School Integration and Other Civic Endeavors. 1943-1978. 1980, 357 p.
- Sylvia Stone, Lifelong Volunteer in San Francisco. 1983, 134 p.
- Sanford Treguboff. In process.

For additional material on nonprofit organizations, see also interviews in the Bay Area Foundation History and San Francisco Arts and the Community projects and the Northern California Jewish Community series, conducted by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library.

INTRODUCTION

In preparing to write an introduction to the memoirs of Florette Pomeroy, I realized that I have known her for thirty years and that we have much in common. For many years, we shared our concerns about then-current problems in San Francisco and traded ideas about what needed doing, Florette as Director of the San Francisco Federated Fund and later of the Northern California Council on Alcoholism and I as executive of the Jewish Welfare Federation. Often, John May would join us for lunch and, as good friends do, add his thoughts as Director of the San Francisco Foundation. After World War II, Florette and I had both participated in Europe in the monumental task of repatriating and relocating the thousands uprooted by the ravages of the war.

To recall the specifics of those common experiences would only be a repeat of what Florette has talked of thoughtfully in the following pages. I believe it would be of more use to those reading this volume to speak briefly of Florette Pomeroy as a human being and as a skilled professional in community philanthropy.

It is in her latest career, as my partner since 1976 in Consultants in Philanthropy, that I know her best. She is a tough lady and a very private person. Unlikely as it may seem, one can work with her for years and not know much about her personal life. Those who are interested in her early life and how she gained her considerable skills in working with people and organizations will find the information in the memoirs.

She may, and often does, work over 12 hours a day. For Florette, half of those hours have often been spent on her avocation: personal concerns that would benefit from her professional skills. It may be the Youth Campus, alcoholics, or individuals unsure of their present or future-people or non-profit organizations with a problem, whose problem she takes on as her own.

In the busiest stage of working with a client, she will take the time to check on available resources, make notes and make dozens of telephone calls about the troubles of others. She will put in this effort when, out of the depths of her professionalism, she diagnoses that that person will really "stray" if he or she doesn't get help right away.

However, Florette is anything but a "bleeding heart". She may collect people and awards because of gratitude for her assistance, but I would say that she does these things as an investment in the future of people and of the community. This, to me, is doing good as opposed to doing well.

Doing well for the community in terms of raising money and/or persuading people to work for charitable enterprises takes leadership. The reward is in being honored and consuming unnecessary quantities of food. For some people, it is sufficient to know that a job has been well done. For others, like Florette, leadership also involves the calculated judgment and toughness to "use" those who have given her those accolades to help another project or another organization. This is doing good in the best sense, making sure that the people and resources will be available when new needs arise.

Even though Florette has always devoted much time and skill to concerns not directly related to her immediate job, in recent years her talents have flowered further as a philanthropic consultant. Working for a single organization, one is hemmed in to a certain extent and one's primary obligation is to the organization's board members and its goals. Now that she is no longer limited to serving one organization, she has the freedom to give her considerable experience and skills to benefit the broader concerns of the Bay Area and beyond.

Her satisfactions are to assist in shaping the community's response to issues that are important, being not so much one's brother's keeper as to be guide and mentor in getting things done which need to be done, and seeing individuals through times of trouble to productive and fulfilling lives.

When you read the memoirs, you will learn the details of how Florette has used her time and talents. Yes, it is one person's story-but what a story!

Stanford M. Treguboff

January, 1984
San Francisco, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Shining a golden cone down through the dimness and noise of San Francisco's cavernous Moscone Center packed with county fair-goers, the spotlight rests on a trim woman in a simple white dress with a tailored bow tucked at the back of her short gray waves and on a small wiry older fellow in forest green shirt and pants. Florette White Pomeroy is presenting a 1983 Volunteer Bureau community service award to retired accountant Dick Romich for rebuilding and maintaining the lush gardens around the St. Francis of Assisi Community Center. Mrs. Pomeroy is one of a dozen well-known civic leaders honoring a few of the unsung heroes who volunteer their time and talent in a multitude of ways that benefit that elusive entity, the quality of life in the Bay Area.

How does one become a symbol of concern and action for the good and welfare of one's city or town? In a thoughtful, candid series of interviews for UC Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office continuing series of interviews on the volunteer community, Mrs. Pomeroy discusses personal influences that have shaped her life and fifty years of professional experiences that have been closely related to many of the major events and concerns of our times. Her recollections bring to life the social impact of the Great Depression and World War II, the professionalization and unification of nonprofit organizations in the 1950s and '60s that led to creation of the United Way of the Bay Area and the combination of discipline and caring that has become the keynote to dealing with individual crises such as faced by those who suffer from alcoholism.

In this informal casebook of social welfare history, two strong qualities are clearly evident: a delight and developing skill in working with volunteers and professional staff, and a late-blooming pride in accomplishment as a woman, in which she has been something of a pioneer. Mrs. Pomeroy tells of being trained in the law in the 1920s when women law students were rare, and of becoming director of the Los Angeles County office of the State Relief Administration in 1932 at the age of 23. Like the emergency expansion of the SRA, the scramble to set up social services and military government in Europe at the height of World War II hostilities required any and all available personnel, male or female. Mrs. Pomeroy was soon aide to the American chief for refugee camps and became deputy director for Austria of the U.S. effort in the International Relief Organization of the U.N., in 1947. She tells of shepherding the redoubtable Eleanor Roosevelt on a tour of the camps and later being swamped with affection by Jewish refugees who attributed their rescue to Mrs. Roosevelt's efforts:

When we got to the Jewish camps, there was absolutely no way of controlling people their feeling about this woman was so intense. Everybody in the camp had to at least touch her . . . she was the wife of the American president and he was responsible for their liberation.

Returning to the U.S., she was the only woman staffer in the ill-fated postwar civil defense program's western region, which contributed to a period of personal disaster. Regaining her equilibrium, Mrs. Pomeroy began her second career in 1954, in what she describes as "a temporary job" with the annual fundraising campaign for the San Francisco Federated Fund, shortly reorganized as the United Community Fund. Four years later, in 1958, she became UCF's first woman executive with a dual role in what in 1955 had become a separate Bay Area-wide fundraising effort. When UCF was merged with United Bay Area Crusade in 1966, Mrs. Pomeroy became a senior deputy to United Bay Area Crusade executive Ray Baarts. From this vantage point, she comments on the fifteen-year saga of unifying five county financial support and social planning organizations serving over 300 agencies into UBAC, now the United Way of the Bay Area. "Even when we got it down to 185 agencies [after unification] it was still nearly an unmanageable chore."

Planning studies leading to the creation of United Way began in the 1950s, with full integration of fundraising, social planning, and allocations for the five Bay Area counties finally becoming operational in 1967. During this period, "the support of volunteer leaders from the counties plus Ray Baarts' tact, diplomacy, and clear view of where we needed to go provided a commitment to the ultimate objective." From reading minutes and reports of the various planning committees, the unification process appeared to the interviewer to have been a period of recurring crises and friction in the small, competitive world of nonprofit agencies. It is extremely helpful to have Mrs. Pomeroy's corrective recollection as a participant that those years were rather a series of stages by which a large number of people worked out the details of an agreed-upon plan. The United Way of the Bay Area and its predecessor organizations so closely reflect the changing concerns and needs of the Bay Area that it is hoped that further study will be done on how these concerns have emerged and been met.

Informal conversations with other social welfare professionals indicate that there may have been resistance to a woman executive in the 1950's and 1960's. Mrs. Pomeroy maintains that she was not aware of it, although there were other tensions resulting from political turnovers or agency reorganizations. She credits Roy Pilling, Los Angeles SRA chief; state SRA administrator Harold Pomeroy, her former husband; Emily Wooley in Los Angeles; and Peter Gibson in Austria with teaching her by their examples how to recruit and maintain the interest of people in the community, the importance of good working relationships among staff, and, most crucial, to keep ideas and activities flowing between them.

In characteristic fashion, when Mrs. Pomeroy took over situations in which there were older or more experienced staff, she dealt with it directly, asking for their suggestions and concerns and for time to become familiar with the organization, rather than letting internal problems go underground and fester. In the refugee camps, which relied heavily on self-government by residents, she recalls the remarkable way in which bereft, destitute people organized the orderly running of their small worlds and

found skills to provide some educational and social activities while agency folk provided the structure and supplies. During a brief stint with a federal wartime housing agency, she discovered that mayors, bankers, housewives and others would come together and convince others to open their spare rooms to defense workers when their importance to a larger community need was explained.

The personal disaster that overcame Mrs. Pomeroy was alcoholism, which she has kept in remission since 1954. It is a tribute to her fortitude, and conviction that we can learn from others' experience, that she can tell of her own disintegration under the impact of liquor with calm objectivity. She describes the long discipline of regaining control of her life and the "tough love" of her mother and, most particularly, of Alcoholics Anonymous that enabled her to do so. Although AA is built on a tradition of anonymity, with the intention that no one should profit from the organization's work, alcoholism continues to blight so many families that Mrs. Pomeroy's account is a significant word of hope as well as clinically fascinating. As background for discussion of her own experience, Mrs. Pomeroy took the interviewer to a meeting of the AA group she helped to organize and also arranged a briefing session with three other recovered alcoholics who share her concern for broader public understanding of how alcoholics function and how they can help themselves. With the permission of all four, the transcript of that session is included as Chapter X of Mrs. Pomeroy's memoir.

The basic tenet of AA which they present, that one must accept the fact that one is an alcoholic and cannot cope with liquor, is generally known. It is a jolt to learn that one must repeat this fact regularly, out loud, and that making the decision to give up liquor is only the first of twelve steps of self-exploration, designed to become a way of life for a recovered alcoholic. Also less familiar is the availability of external support, "sponsors" as they are called, who will hold a person's hand literally and figuratively while he or she decides, perhaps many times, that they are alcoholic and through arduous steps to recovery that the sponsor too has followed. At a time when few women were present in AA groups, Mrs. Pomeroy reports that she had not one, but three sponsors, all of them women, who were a vital part of her return to control of her life.

The Twelfth Step admonishes one "to carry the message [of AA] to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." Mrs. Pomeroy took this step by becoming involved both as a volunteer member and informal adviser of Bay Area alcoholism prevention groups. As director of the United Community Fund, she encouraged the first areawide conference on alcoholism (in 1962), which happened to be the first staff assignment for Martin Paley, then the new United Community Fund health program assistant and now executive of the San Francisco Foundation. By 1966, she decided that it was important for her to combine her community organization experience with her commitment to more and better alcoholism education and treatment services. "If there was one thing I wanted to do more than continue to work with

United Way, it was to make a success of the Northern California Council on Alcoholism." What she did could be called the start of her third, or entrepreneurial, career.

From her experience with the long process of creating the five-county planning, fundraising, and interagency coordination structure of United Bay Area Crusade, she knew the key people in San Francisco's nonprofit world and was familiar with the combination of leadership, program vitality, and financial stability that allows an organization to flourish. So she took her concerns to her old friends Sanford Treguboff, then head of the Jewish Welfare Federation, and John May, executive of the San Francisco Foundation, now retired.

"Over the years, John and Treg and I had gotten in the habit of getting together if one or another of us saw a problem developing and talking about what might be done. It got so that if people saw us together, they'd say, 'Watch out. Something's going to pop.' I told them how frustrated I was that the Council was getting nowhere. They were dedicated people, but nothing was happening. We talked about my ideas and after a while we had a plan, which I took very quietly to a few of the board members that I knew best and they agreed to help. I didn't want to cause any waves until I knew that we were going to be able to do it.

"What we worked out was a five-year plan to build the staff and program of the Council. The San Francisco Foundation agreed informally to give the Council decreasing funding during those five years if I could come up with guarantees of similar amounts from private donors. Several of the people I'd worked with in the advance gifts section of United Crusade campaigns were very good about helping us get the private match. When we had it, Caroline Charles who was on the board was just marvelous in convincing the Council that this plan would work and that I should become their director," in January 1968.

"What could they do?" Mrs. Pomeroy chuckled. "I had a dowry." Putting her dowry promptly to work, the Council under her direction started an industrial program, to encourage employers to work with employees who were alcoholics to remedy impaired job performance rather than fire them for drunkenness; to begin building linkages between small struggling councils in Bay Area counties; and was soon working closely with the National Council on Alcoholism, itself beginning to develop a national base for its public education and legislative efforts.

Having turned her volunteer concern into professional responsibility, Mrs. Pomeroy looked around for a community activity that could use her energy on its board. Larry Kramer, an organizational consultant, suggested that the California College of Podiatry could use some help in defining a new role for the institution, but they had never had a woman on their board.

She is rightly pleased that she not only took on the challenge, but also presided over the college board from 1972 to 1974 while it carried out a successful campaign for a new building.

Kramer and Paley are just two of the succeeding generation of nonprofit leadership mentioned in the oral history memoir who learned something of how the community functions from Mrs. Pomeroy and were encouraged by her, as she had learned from Eva Hance, Leslie Ganyard, Caroline Charles, and other distinguished board members and social workers of the '30s and '40s and '50s. Mrs. Pomeroy's accounts of the last days of the Community Chest and Fruit and Flower Fund confirm that the matrix of social and cultural services has become immeasurably more complex in the past generation, with the growth of state and federal programs, varied and extensive training for professionals and volunteers, and the appearance of numerous volunteer management organizations. But it is also evident that it is the network of individuals who are willing to work together on community efforts and collectively sense what is needed that continues to be the key to the success of voluntary organizations.

Not one to contemplate retirement cordially, Mrs. Pomeroy began yet another venture in 1976 that has become a significant addition to this continuously changing, unofficial nerve system. That year, Sanford Treguboff invited her to become a partner in Consultants in Philanthropy, which serves a kind of brokerage function between assorted private donors and volunteer organizations seeking funding. As Treguboff points out in his introduction to this memoir, the matches they make between local philanthropists and program ideas are "an investment in the future of people and of the community." The partners' work is also a volunteer labor of love in that, to the extent their time permits, they provide consultation without cost to organizations seeking assistance.

"Many times, groups come in convinced that an additional \$50,000 will solve all their problems," explains Mrs. Pomeroy. "When we talk over their goals and their operating procedures, they often see that a clearer focus on their program and a better use of staff and lay leadership can give them a new lease on life."

In the social turmoil of the last twenty years there have been at least ten applicants for every available charitable dollar, and sharp protests from national, regional, and local groups about who gets grants. Mrs. Pomeroy's accessibility testifies to the concern of the donor half of the equation for broadening participation in the community process in the hope that their contributions will have a maximum effect in establishing a service people will use, setting an example of needed activities that others will follow, and attracting continuing support.

This informal advising has brought Mrs. Pomeroy in recent years into contact with Arlene Daniels, Aileen Hernandez, The Women's Bank, Advocates for Women, the Women's Foundation, and other champions of feminist views.

"I do not believe I had given enough attention to women's needs," she reflects. "I was fortunate in that I have always been accepted professionally on the basis of my skills. But that is not the case for many women.

"I have become personally involved, in a small way, in the peace movement too. After all I saw the tragedy of war in the refugee camps in Europe, I cannot understand why I was not an anti-war activist in the '60s."

The openness of Mrs. Pomeroy's discussion of her attitudes and successes and failures and the impact on them of major events and issues of our times make this a moving and instructive memoir. Like other oral histories, it is not the definitive study of any of the topics discussed. It does provide insight and illumination on the body of literature on social welfare, community organization, the Depressions of 1930 and 1980, and the wars of the second half of the twentieth century. It is hoped that it will enlighten future scholars and encourage them to further work in these fields.

Mrs. Pomeroy was, more than many interviewees, a participant in planning and carrying out this memoir, providing various papers and books for study and suggesting useful sources. Ann Wilson and Dorothy Rotondale of the United Way of the Bay Area; James Leiby of the University of California School of Social Welfare; Martin Paley, of the San Francisco Foundation. Roberta Meyer-Sheldon, William Sheldon and Blair Fuller were particularly helpful in preparing for individual interviews. Special thanks are due the donors who made the memoir possible, a list of whom is included on a separate page. Because the interviewer had participated in a minor role in Bay Area social planning and volunteer service activities, the discussions were often exploration of shared experiences.

Ten interviews were recorded with Mrs. Pomeroy in her office in San Francisco's Mills Tower between March and August 1982. She reviewed the edited transcripts in chunks as her time permitted, including one batch sent from Honolulu en route to a visit to China. Occasionally a passage was vigorously marked "Delete - repetitious" or "This is not very clear," a few suggested that the interviewer be more explicit or requested verification of a particular detail. Michelle Stafford and Rebecca Stuhr-Rommereim shepherded transcribing of the tapes, indexing, and final manuscript preparation through the Regional Oral History Office's recently-donated Zendex computer, establishing a baseline for the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of this technological marvel of the 1980s.

Gabrielle Morris
Interviewer-Editor

November 10, 1983

Mrs. Florette White Pomeroy xii
Partner - Consultants in Philanthropy
220 Bush Street - Suite 1821
San Francisco, California 94104
Telephone: (415) 986 5177

Mrs. Pomeroy was born in Seattle, Washington, daughter of Bert Doanne and Clara (Doyle) White. She attended Mount St. Mary's College, 1931-32; received her certificate in law, Loyola University in 1932.

Married Harold Edward Pomeroy, January 17, 1942, (divorced 1955).

- 1932-1942 - Various State and Local Emergency Programs in California.
- 1943-1945 - Field representative, Office of Administrator, National Housing Agency, Washington.
- 1945-1947 - Director, UNRRA Tracing Bureau for Austria.
- 1946 - Representative for Austria, International Tracing Conference, Warsaw, Poland; consultant Hungarian Red Cross Tracing Service.
- 1947-1951 - Deputy Chief of Mission for Austria, International Refugee Organization, UN.
- 1948-1950 - Fullbright Commission for Austria.
- 1952-1954 - Regional Welfare Officer, Federal Civil Defense Administration.
- 1954-1958 - Director of Agency Relations, United Bay Area Crusade, San Francisco.
- 1958-1966 - Executive Director, United Community Fund, San Francisco.
- 1966-1968 - Director, Agency Relations, United Bay Area Crusade.

January 1, 1968 to October 1, 1975 -- Executive Director, National Council on Alcoholism-Bay Area.

Oct. 1, 1975 to present: Consultant - Community organizations, foundation management, et

, Jan., 1972 to present - Consultant, Mary A. Crocker Trust

Nov., 1978 to present - Consultant, Community Affairs Department, Levi Strauss & Co.

April, 1977 - Dec., 1979 - Associate Consultant, Walter & Elise Haas Fund

MEMBER: Phi Delta Delta, International Legal Women's Fraternity.
Community Advisory Committee, Junior League of San Francisco, 1968-1970.
Board of Directors, California College of Podiatric Medicine,
1969 - 1977 (Board Chairman, 1972-74).
Community Advisory Committee, The San Francisco Consortium,
1969 - 1973
Board of Directors, Consumer Credit Counselors of California,
1968 - 1976

MEMBER

Board of Directors, Health Professions Council, 1972 - 1976 .
 Board of Directors, S. F. Hearing & Speech Center, 1973 - 1978 .
 Corporate Board, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of S.F. - Jan. 19
 National Board - National Council on Alcoholism - 1977 - (present)
 Alcoholism Council of California - State Board - 1976 to present
 California Council for the Humanities, Board member; 3 yr. term start Dec.
 Stepping Stone - Women's Alcoholism Recovery Home - Bd. & Exec. Com.
 1979 - (present)

- March 1969** Awarded Phoebe Apperson Hearst medallion as one of San Francisco's
 10 Distinguished Women of 1968.
- May 1975** Received The San Francisco Foundation Award, 1975, for outstanding
 leadership in significant social planning projects with particular
 emphasis in problems of alcoholism.
- March 1978** The Jefferson Award - San Francisco Examiner and the American
 Institute of Public Service - for service benefiting the
 community.
- March, 1981** Lifetime Achievement Award - Legal Assistance to the Elderly

Who's Who of American Women, First Edition.

I FAMILY AND YOUTH

[Interview 1: March 24, 1982]##

Childhood in the Northwest

Morris: We usually start with some basic biographical material. Were you born in Los Angeles?

Pomeroy: No, I was born in Seattle, Washington on the twenty-second of September, 1910. My parents, Clara Doyle White and Bert Doane White, had married quite late in life. My mother was I believe forty-three at the time I was born, and I was a first child. My father was a couple of years younger. My parents had met in Seattle where my mother was with a stock company on the stage and my father was a building contractor; he was building roads in the State of Washington at the time. I was born in the old Boaz Hotel in Seattle. My first crib was a wardrobe trunk.

Morris: Oh, that's lovely. That's a great piece of Americana!

Pomeroy: I love it! My first and only stage appearance was in my mother's arms on the stage when she was in a stock production of some kind that required a baby, so I was the baby. For many years, I owned a little nugget that was a gift from the cast which is lost--sadly. I have no idea what happened to it.

My parents moved from Seattle to Victoria fairly soon after my birth. My brother, John Vancouver White, who is eighteen months younger than I, was born in Victoria, British Columbia. And my father was engaged

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a new tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 346.

there in the contracting business. Sometime when we were probably three or four years old, we moved to the little town of Sidney on Vancouver Island where he constructed a hotel. We did not live at the construction site. We lived on a very small farm. I think we had a cow and we had chickens and rabbits and dogs and cats. It was lovely. I have better memories of it than my brother, who is a little bit younger than I, because we probably moved away from there when we were about seven.

There are some nice, sort of fragmentary memories about the hotel. My father made a trip to London to buy the furnishings for the hotel.

Morris: He was going to operate the hotel?

Pomeroy: Yes, he was--but something happened to that obviously. Some rather lovely things came from London and there were still a few of them in our family for a long time, but the notable thing that I have that came from London is my teddy bear. It's about ten inches tall and I still have it. It sits on my bed, and I have cherished it for all these years.

Morris: How long did your mother continue on the stage?

Pomeroy: She abandoned the stage after my birth. She finished out whatever plays they were in. It was a stock company.

Morris: That traveled?

Pomeroy: Traveled. When they were leaving Seattle, she left the company. They sometime in that year, the first year after I was born, moved to Victoria. We seem to have lived very comfortably in Victoria because we had a Chinese, who took care of me and then my brother after he was born, and was a wonderful cook. We have marvelous memories of his kitchen and all of the beautiful things that came out of it.

Actress Mother, Absent Father

Pomeroy: Then when we moved out to the country to be near the hotel that Father was building, Mother was the major-domo and housekeeper and cook and everything else.

Morris: Do you have any impressions of how she made the adjustment from being an actress to being a housewife and mother?

Pomeroy: My sense is that she made it very easily. Apparently, even though she was marrying late in life and had had really a fascinating life up to that point--she had done many things that women of her generation did not do--evidently, her interest in family and making a career for herself as a wife and mother was strong enough so that there did not appear to be any difficulties, at least that were apparent to me. There may be some question actually about how well she made the adjustment, because by the time I was probably twelve, my father left us with another woman.

Morris: A local woman?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes and a friend of my mother's, a nurse, who had spent quite a bit of time in our home, which was very tough on Mother.

A little bit about Mother might be of interest in this record because she was a most remarkable woman for her time. She was born of Irish parents, but she was born in this country, in Ohio. She graduated from normal school in Ohio when she was too young to receive a teaching certificate, which must have been sometime under eighteen. She had a younger sister who had gone to Chicago to be apprenticed in the millinery business, so Mother went off to Chicago where she entered the Soper School of Oratory which provided training for the stage.

Morris: That was not considered startling and unsuitable in those days?

Pomeroy: Oh, her parents were outraged, yes, but she persisted and graduated from the Soper School and had immediate opportunities to go into stock. Along the line somewhere she went to work in Yellowstone National Park and she worked one summer in the Wiley Way system and camps there. (That was the way you stayed. You moved from camp to camp by horse-drawn carriages.) The following year, she was invited back by the Wileys to take charge of all the women who were working in the park for them. She did that for several years and that has bearing on what happened to her later.

She went from Yellowstone to the Yukon [looking at fob on bracelet]—in 1907 which would be the year after our great earthquake. She spent a year in Alaska in Nome with a brother and his family. The brother was there goldmining and apparently at that time was rather successful. Mother was given—I still have it—a beautiful gold and ivory insignia presented to her by the Elks Club of Nome, Alaska in appreciation for a performance that she did for them of readings and so on; she entertained while she was in Alaska.

She and my aunt, the brother's wife, were the first women to go by dog team alone from Nome to Juneau.

Morris: What a trip!

Pomeroy: That was in 1907. So Mother's remarkable independence, which shows up all through her life, and certainly is part of my legacy, started very early.

We moved from Sidney to Vancouver after father had completed the hotel. I guess he sold it, because he started a business in Vancouver, and we started school there, parochial school with the sisters. It was about 1921 when my father decided that he was going to start a new business in Winnipeg, Manitoba; and he went off and started his new business and took this very lovely nurse, who had been sort of part of our family, with him.

My mother, who was a devout Irish Catholic to the day of her death, took this very hard. She would not, for many years, grant my father a divorce.

After a couple of years alone in Vancouver, she made the decision that we would move to California where she had two sisters, one in San Diego and one in Hollywood. We went first to San Diego and lived there for about a year. We went to school there, to parochial schools, and then moved to Hollywood. We first lived with my aunt and then got our own housing.

My father, by this time, was not doing well by supporting us, and Mother was working at whatever she could find to do. She did some work in pictures, some practical nursing, a variety of things.

Morris: Did you see your father at all?

Pomeroy: He simply disappeared from our lives. Many years later I tracked him down and saw him briefly before I went to Europe.

Morris: What kind of experience was that?

Pomeroy: Satisfying to me just because I had had the need to see him, to know that he was alive, and to find out what his feelings were about his children. They were positive but not--He had made no effort in all of the years after we moved to California other than he persisted with Mother in his efforts to get a divorce because he wanted to marry Jane. But he had made no great effort. Well, I shouldn't say he made no great effort. We did keep in touch with him because, up to the point of when I graduated from high school, he had made me the offer of sending me to college--he was doing very well at this point--and as a graduation present, I was to have a car. So this sounded all very impressive. I had ap-

plied to and been accepted at the University of California; we were to start school in August in those days. In July, a communication from my father said, "Sorry, there is no money for either college or for the car, and sorry"--that's all. And that was really the end of communication.

I was bitterly disappointed, because Cal was something I had really wanted. I had already made up my mind I wanted to go to law school and I wanted to do my undergraduate work at Cal. Well, there was simply no money for me to go to Cal. In those days, scholarships were certainly not as prevalent as they are these days. And financial help--there was no such thing as loans.

So I--with mother's permission--I went down to Los Angeles and persuaded the president of Loyola University to admit me to the law school as a special student with no undergraduate work. It was a form of insanity, I'm sure! My commitment to the president, who was a marvelous old man, Father Joseph Sullivan, was that I would find a way to take some undergraduate work, but that in the meantime, I was going to have to support myself. This was a night law school, and many of the students in those days had not had the so-called required undergraduate work. They were admitted subject to their being able to maintain the scholastic record that was required. None of them were as young as I, and I was the only woman in my class.

Morris: Could we go back a minute? I'd like to ask just a couple of more questions about your father. He sounds like a kind of entrepreneurial sort.

Pomeroy: Oh, I think very much so.

Morris: Given to enthusiasms and new ventures.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Morris: Did he make an impact on you as a young child in the years that he was still around?

Pomeroy: [chuckles] He was always the easy one in the family as far as I was concerned; my mother was much more strict with me. As so frequently happens, my brother was younger and I was enough of a tomboy so that my father taught me to drive when I was about nine years old--much to my mother's absolute indignation!

Morris: I can believe it. Was the church important in your growing up?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, we were a part of parochial schools and all of the activities of the Catholic church during all of my growing-up

period. I went to convent boarding schools for three years in high school because Mother felt that I needed more supervision than she could give me when she was working.

Morris: She was working then?

Pomeroy: Yes, and so I went to Sisters of the Holy Names in Pomona.

Morris: When she was off-stage, was she also a dramatic kind of person?

Pomeroy: Surprisingly, no. She had a marvelous memory and she always had something in the way of a reading or a poem or an anecdote that was related to whatever situation you were in. She was very well-read and she did instill a real love of good literature. She had very little time for the sort of trashy things that she felt young people were being exposed to. But if you wanted to read Shakespeare until midnight, she let you do that.

Morris: Was there time with her working and the tight financial situation to participate in the community?

Pomeroy: Not a great deal. Our participation was through schools and with friends that we made in school.

Morris: Did she encourage you, did you grow up expecting that college was the way to go?

Pomeroy: Oh, absolutely. She was determined that somehow that would be accomplished. It was interesting; she did not really believe that my father was going to deliver when he made this promise. She had the feeling that was somehow going to fall through. She could not have predicted the crash (his business demise preceded that a bit) but she didn't have a great deal of faith in what he would do. She had reason not to because his participation in our support had been very limited over the years.

Morris: How about the aunts? Were they a major part of your growing up?

Pomeroy: My one aunt, my Aunt Florette, was an interesting influence from the very beginning. My mother had wanted to name me Mary Rose after her mother. She sent a telegram to her sister who was then in Fresno, California in the millinery business saying that a little girl had arrived, and my aunt wired back, "Congratulations to you and little Florette." And that is the way I was named!

Morris: What can you do?

Pomeroy: Well, this is the younger sister, who had dominated much of my mother's life. You saw Mother get away from her and do all of

these interesting things on her own; but whenever she was around Florette, she permitted her to make decisions and make plans. The reason we moved from San Diego to Hollywood was because Florette had moved from San Diego to Hollywood and thought we should be there.

Morris: Was Aunt Florette much younger?

Pomeroy: No, she was the next younger. Then there was still a younger one, Mary Ann--Mamie--who lived in San Diego, and was the youngest of the three sisters. She just never got herself in the situation where Florette could run her around!

Morris: That's an interesting commentary on the middle child.

Pomeroy: Yes, you bet; the middle child who takes over at the time the older child has a certain amount of of attention and care, and then the middle child comes along and takes over that role. Then when the third one comes along, somehow I think that middle child competes very successfully for attention. It's interesting.

Morris: Were there other significant people in your childhood aside from the sisters in the church and the sisters in the family?

Pomeroy: Not really. My brother and I enjoyed the usual sibling relationship of battling with each other most of the time. [laughs] My mother never tired of reminding me of the time that I turned the hose on my brother and he got pneumonia and nearly died. He was not well as a very young child; he developed ulcers when he was of high school age and had an emergency hospitalization and surgery because of a burst ulcer. We have become very good friends, but it took a long time.

Morris: Yes; if you survive childhood, then you have a basis for friendship with your siblings.

Pomeroy: [softly] Yes, yes.

Determined Student of Law

Morris: What had happened to make you decide by seventeen or eighteen that you wanted to go to law school?

Pomeroy: Even younger than that; by the time I was about fifteen. Mother and I used to track this and attempt to make some assessment of what had motivated this. The only thing really that I can think

of is that two or three of the people that Mother knew that were very kind to her had lawyers in the family, and somehow I was impressed by the fact that these were nice, good people [taps for emphasis] who were very kind to Mother because Mother was having a struggle.

It wasn't until, I guess it was my first year in high school, that Mother renewed an acquaintanceship with the man who had been a fellow employee in Yellowstone and was by this time the general manager of all of the concession-company activities in Sequoia National Park. Mother went to him and told him she would like to work in the park. They were that year opening the big new house-keeping camp in Sequoia, Camp Kaweah, and he offered Mother the manager's job, which she took, and that's where Mother spent her summers from 1925 until she was involuntarily retired at age eighty! [laughter]

Morris: What a remarkable, sturdy person.

Pomeroy: Oh, an incredible lady; an incredible lady. She was furious with them for retiring her! They, by this time, felt great responsibility because part of her routine was camp inspection, which involved walking a distance of about two and a half miles through the camp over some fairly rough paths. They had visions of Mother with her stick ending up flat on her face somewhere, and they were really concerned.

Morris: So much for women's lib!

Pomeroy: Yes, plus the fact that her hearing was becoming somewhat impaired. It did make it very difficult for her to adequately supervise her employees. The employees would think she had heard everything that they had told her but it was not necessarily so; a marvelous remarkable woman. But that's where we spent our summers then.

Morris: I was wondering if you had shared that experience.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. The first year that Mother was there, we were too young to be given jobs, but she was allowed to have us there. She wisely required us to do a lot of things around the camp in order to keep us occupied and so she'd know where we were. Probably the next year, I think, we were both given jobs. I worked in every place in that concession company at one time or another, as a clerk at the desk, as a waitress, selling in the curio shop, as a maid, doing some of everything, which was a wonderful experience. I did that for all the years I was in high school and three college years. My last summer up there, 1932, became the year that I finished law school. I studied and I took the bar, which I did not pass.

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Morris: —To have a guaranteed summer employment in those years must have been pretty remarkable.

Pomeroy: It was wonderful, and it provided a curious mix of experiences. One learned some responsibility. You learned that if you were on duty at seven o'clock in the dining room, you jolly well got there at seven o'clock or you got really rapped over the knuckles and it didn't matter if you were Mrs. White's daughter or not. In fact, the fact that you were Mrs. White's daughter meant that you had better be there because you would hear it not only from your boss but from your mother! Some of the jobs—for example, working in the office of the camp, handling reservations and so on—were marvelous experiences in organizing.

Morris: How did you come in contact with Father Joseph at Loyola? Had you known him beforehand or did you just track him down?

Pomeroy: No, I just simply went down to Los Angeles and asked who the president of Loyola University was. I went first and talked to the dean, the proper thing, and the dean laughed at me and said, "No, no way can you be admitted here. You have none, absolutely none, of the qualifications. Besides, I don't want any more women in this law school." He had had two or three and was not very enthusiastic on that score.

Morris: With your hat and gloves on?

Pomeroy: Oh, with my hat and gloves and clutching a rosary in my pocket! Before I was through with my interview with Father Joseph Sullivan, I had shed some tears over my disappointment and so on, and this is apparently what melted the poor man.

Morris: What had you thought you would do about undergraduate preparation?

Pomeroy: I had not really made a plan. I thought I could go straight to law school. I had a certain singleness of purpose there. I hadn't been in law school six months before I realized that I was disadvantaging myself, but by this time I wouldn't give up. My third and fourth years, I did undergraduate work at Mount St. Mary's College.

That provided a very interesting two years because I had classes from eight until noon and I worked four hours a day, one at five, in various kinds of jobs, went to law school classes from six to nine—and then generally studied with some fellow students

in the law library from about nine-thirty until twelve. Not surprisingly, I ended up with an ulcer at a very early age.

Morris: How about anemia and other ailments?

Pomeroy: No, apparently because I did different kinds of jobs. Sometimes I worked in tea rooms and places like that where I got food. Mother was very insistent that I eat! It was probably the only time in my life that I ate breakfast, but she stuffed breakfast down me before I went off to school in the morning.

Morris: Was the law school population primarily older people who were working? What was the pattern?

Pomeroy: It was a mix. There were about twenty in my class. Of that twenty, probably twelve were graduates of Loyola University. So they were a little bit older than I, but some of them, a couple of them, I had been in my last year in high school with. Then there were a number of older people who had been working for a number of years. There was a court reporter and there were a couple of teachers and people who had decided much later in life to study law.

Morris: And no other women?

Pomeroy: No other women in my class. There were other women in the law school who preceded me.

Morris: Did you get to know them at all?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Morris: Was there any kind of special relationship?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, indeed. [I] remained friends with three of them really until they died. Again, they were older women. One of them I shared an apartment with in my first year out of law school, and two of them are women with whom I kept in touch. There also was a women's international legal fraternity, Phi Delta Delta, which had a small chapter at Loyola; it had been founded at USC. The women in the law school and the older women who had graduated from USC law school were very kind and very helpful and supportive of this little band of women. There weren't more than a dozen of us in Loyola.

Morris: Was there any kind of common thread of why you were in law school or your general stance toward--

Pomeroy: Do you mean among the women?

Morris: Yes.

Pomeroy: Not really. I'm trying to think. Betty Graydon, the woman that I shared an apartment with, had been a inheritance tax appraiser, I think, and decided to study law. She was in her late forties when she graduated from law school, had worked with a lot of the judges, and was given a lot of support and eventually became the U.S. commissioner in San Diego. Several of the women were married to lawyers and had, two or three of them, raised families and then had decided that they liked their husbands' professions.

Morris: They'd like to know what he's talking about?

Pomeroy: --Very daring in those days. But, no, I didn't detect any--and we were certainly [chuckles] a kind of a motley crew. We were very different. We seemed to enjoy a certain amount of social interchange, but it was pretty limited really. It revolved around any events that Phi Delta would engage in. Generally what we did related to what was going on at USC because that was where the big chapter was.

Morris: When you decided to pick up the undergraduate background--I do like that--

Pomeroy: Reverse approach.

Morris: Yes. What kinds of subjects did you particularly go after at Mount St. Mary's?

Pomeroy: I did basic English; French (which I had been nattering about off and on all through high school and even a bit in grade school in Canada). They required basic sciences, although I wasn't very crazy about it--I didn't have much bent for it--and English literature, history, civics, political science. Those were the range of--

Morris: A standard liberal arts--

Pomeroy: Very standard liberal arts, yes. The nuns were awfully cute at Mount St. Mary's. They had to do some juggling of some of their kinds of classes in order to let me work in this equivalent of a full semester's work in the period between eight and twelve. I guess the oddness of the thing sort of appealed to them, because they were really enormously helpful.

Morris: Were they encouraging of the idea of ambition in women and broader horizons?

Pomeroy: I don't have any sense of whether or not they really were because the time that I spent there was spent eternally in class. I had no extracurricular relationship with the institution or any of the people in it.

Morris: You had no time for it.

Pomeroy: No, no.

Morris: What were your personal ambitions at that point?

Pomeroy: At that point, I wanted to finish law school, pass the bar, and practice law. Now, all of that seemed to be the achievement that I was moving toward. The first break in the thread came with not passing the bar. Looking back on it, one has to be a little appalled at how naive it is possible to be, but here I took the bar before I was twenty-one. Had I passed it, I would have been the youngest person to have passed it in California at that time. My disappointment was enormous and, looking back on it, I was able fairly easily to relate that to my decision to get married.

Brief Early Marriage

Pomeroy: I had been beamed around two years--summers--by a nice young man a few years older than I who was a student at Cal Tech: Albert William Atwood, Jr. When I failed to pass the bar, I leaped to the conclusion that that was sort of the end of my life and maybe I had better get married. So I did! I think mother was not happy about it, although we were married in the Catholic church. He was a forest ranger when I first met him.

Morris: Did you meet him in Sequoia?

Pomeroy: I met him in Sequoia, and we went around together up there two summers. Then in the fall after I graduated from Loyola, which was 1932, when Bill came back from Sequoia in the fall, he started beaming me around. When I got the results of the bar exam, in November probably, and Bill proposed to me, I said, "Yes, let's get married."

Morris: Had he proposed to you before?

Pomeroy: No, he had not, and I never will know, nor I am sure did he ever know whether he proposed to me just because he felt sorry for me or because he really felt he loved me. We had a few happy years, but it was not a wise marriage for either one of us.

Fortunately, both of our lives, I think, moved in reasonably good directions afterwards. At the time we separated, he went to live at the University Club in Los Angeles and protested that his life was devastated and that he would never be able to reconstruct his life. The day after our divorce was final, he remarried. So I had no great conscience about him. I didn't feel that I had irreparably damaged his life, because it was my decision to separate.

We lived in Pasadena the first year we were married, and I had continued to work so that Bill could get his master's degree at Cal Tech. Then the second year, he was working on the Metropolitan Aqueduct out in Indio and I continued to work in Los Angeles. We had an apartment in Los Angeles and we took turns spending weekends together. I went to Indio one weekend and he came to Los Angeles another--not exactly a brilliant way to start a marriage.

Morris: That must have been difficult for you, being close to the Catholic church, to make a decision to end the marriage.

Pomeroy: Yes, although I think in all honesty, my difficulties revolved more around what I thought it would do to my mother than my own internal conflict as far as the church was concerned.

Morris: There are technical difficulties also for a Catholic, aren't there?

Pomeroy: Oh, if you want to remarry, there are great technical difficulties! Divorce in a Catholic marriage is not the problem. The problem is remarriage. If you are willing to live a long life of solitude, you can be in big favor with the Catholic church, but not if you want to remarry. Mother handled the business of my divorce--It took her a long time to come to like Bill, and then about that time I had made up my mind that I wasn't that enchanted with my future. But she was supportive of me at that time.

Mother as Friend; Jackson Chance's Cram Course

Pomeroy: Actually, we bought a house together, a duplex, after my separation. We lived together for a couple of years in Los Angeles. It really was the beginning of my friendship with my mother.

Morris: A shift from a parent-child relationship.

Pomeroy: Yes, and a shift having in mind that my mother was in her forties when I was born and that women of her generation were older at that age than women of our generation are. Mother had long grey hair worn in long braids made in a coronet around the top of her head. I always had the sense of being with an older person all the years I was growing up--a much older person and, indeed, most of the parents of my contemporaries were much younger. Now, we're moving back apparently toward a point where this will not be such an uncommon phenomenon, although perhaps not too often in the forties.

Morris: Forty isn't as old as it was forty years ago.

Pomeroy: Oh, not at all. So my sense of my mother as a person was that of a much older person, and it wasn't until my twenties that I began to have some feeling that she was a friend. I was almost in awe, not that there was any--she was not a stern parent. She was a strict parent, but not stern.

Morris: You began to see her as a person with her own beliefs and feelings.

Pomeroy: Yes, and to find that she was accepting me as a person. In other words, she could be in my house and it was my house; I could be in her house and it was her house, without any difficulty. We found that living together, we were pretty compatible.

Morris: That's a very fine thing to discover.

Pomeroy: That was the beginning of what, over the years, became not only a daughter-mother relationship, but a good friendship with lots of strength in it.

Morris: That's interesting that you feel that started in the dissolution of another relationship.

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: During this period of transition from failing the bar exam through the marriage that didn't work, were you conscious of feelings about what was going on in the community? Going back to your idea that lawyers were kind of good people, had that idea stayed with you through your own struggle with torts and contracts and all of those other things law students study?

Pomeroy: I think it was probably dimmed a bit. What happened to me is that simultaneously with finishing law school, failing the bar, my

first job after I finished law school was the job that changed my direction. As a matter of fact, when I started working, I took Jackson Chance's quiz course.

Morris: Did you?

Pomeroy: Yes, at night.

Morris: And you failed the bar exam?

Pomeroy: And I failed the bar, and I'm sure--I'm glad he doesn't have to hear about it, bless his heart. [pause, softer voice] A wonderful figure he was. He was so bright.

Morris: Tell me a little bit about him.

Pomeroy: Our quiz course lasted eight weeks, and he probably was there one night each of eight weeks. I can't even remember the subjects that he taught, which is pretty bad. But I had the feeling, when listening to this man--first of all, he was very attractive; there was a feeling of strength, and he had a wonderful voice. Everything that I remember hearing him say was always a thought completely put together, never faltered for a word. You concentrated. There was no distraction when you listened to him. I remember it as a very compelling experience. I don't think that I had any instructors in law school that compared with him.

Morris: He was a relatively young fellow himself at that point. He was not too long out of law school.

Pomeroy: No, he wasn't--he might have been--

Morris: He and his wife, Ruth, came out of Boalt about 1923.

Pomeroy: That's right, so that he was nine years older. His quiz course had taken southern California by storm. I don't know whether it was given up here then, but there were two or three quiz courses given and within two years, his had been recognized as being the best preparation for the bar.

As a matter of fact, after I missed the bar, we were told that in those Depression years, they were making a decision as to how many people they would admit. They were grading on the basis of the number to be admitted and it was comparative grading. If you had five hundred people who were going to be admitted in the state of California and they all got seventy or better, everybody else who got below [was not admitted to the bar]. My grade, when I finally got it, was 69.2. I eventually got over the sense of shame and remorse about it.

Morris: For a very young person who had put that kind of concentrated labor into those four years, it would be a shattering kind of experience.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. I look back on it now and I think, probably, I decided to get married because I was disappointed. Maybe that was as good a reason as any at that point, thinking of some of the devastating things I might have done to myself! [laughs]



Clara Doyle White
ca. 1935

II LOS ANGELES COUNTY RELIEF PROGRAMS, 1932-1938##

Developing Services During the Depression

- Morris: Why don't we go into your work with state and local emergency programs in California in 1932 to 1942. You were starting to tell me about the first job that you took.
- Pomeroy: The first job was as a clerk for sixteen dollars a week for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, or paid by Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds which were the first aid funds that were channeled to California during the Depression. This would have been July of '32. I was working for Eugene Brown who was the assistant in Los Angeles to Raymond Branion, the State Relief Administrator.

The State Relief Administration was just in its embryonic form, and the chairman of the Los Angeles County Relief Committee, which was the legally empowered agency in Los Angeles to spend emergency relief funds, was Joseph Scott, a distinguished Los Angeles attorney, who had been one of my instructors in law school. When he took the chairmanship of the committee, he said to Mr. Brown that he would like to have a lawyer as secretary of the committee, because he felt they were assuming a lot of legal responsibility for the expenditure of very large amounts of money.

The budget didn't pay a salary that would attract a lawyer, so finally Mr. Scott said, "I think you have one of my students working for you. If you could assign her, I think perhaps that would work out." So, at \$125 a month, I was appointed as the secretary.

- Morris: That's a good increase from \$16 a week.

Pomeroy: It was very impressive. I continued in that capacity until we started forming the Los Angeles County Relief Administration, which was the Los Angeles arm of the State Relief Administration.

Morris: But the funding was coming from the federal government, initially directly to Los Angeles and then subsequently through Sacramento.

Morris: Did you see this as a possible career opportunity at this point?

Pomeroy: No, one did not see things as career opportunities at the pit of the Depression, and this was still the pit of the Depression, 1932. One took a job. It didn't begin to take on the possible proportions of career probably for two years.

What had been a small Los Angeles office of the State Relief Administration, with a staff of three or four people, within a period of six to nine months became a very large organization that took over the administration of the district unemployment relief offices. The committee, the Los Angeles County Relief Committee, became the responsible policy-making and approving body. That committee employed as its director, Roy Pilling, a man recommended by the state relief administrator. And Roy Pilling became my first real mentor in public administration.

Morris: He had been in the state?

Pomeroy: He had been in the state organization located here in San Francisco. He was an engineer by training, but an absolutely wonderful person in terms of the depth of his concern about people. His requirements for performance on the part of his staff were extraordinarily high, but he set the example. There were no unfinished pieces of business in his office at the end of any given day, and he expected all of us to perform the same way. It was a marvelous training.

Within three months, I became the administrative assistant. I had the responsibility for the organization of all of the services that were necessary for the committee, which included hiring a battery of stenotypists in order to have verbatim minutes because the committee was approving projects and vast amounts of money. Mr. Scott was still sitting on top of it and being very much concerned about documenting everything we did.

Morris: This Los Angeles County Relief Committee was an ad hoc committee?

Pomeroy: No, it was not ad hoc. It was legislated and appointed by the county board of supervisors; and then in effect handed to the state relief administrator, and he was told that this was his arm in Los Angeles County.

Morris: There was also a Los Angeles Welfare Commission.

Pomeroy: There was a Los Angeles County welfare board, yes, separate from that. That agency was concerned only with direct relief and not with unemployment relief.

Morris: Was that a source of confusion?

Pomeroy: I don't think it was particularly a source of confusion. I think it was a source probably of serious resentment on the part of the Los Angeles County social work community, many of whom worked for the welfare board. The unemployment relief organization was operating on a very different basis. It was operating on the basis of certifying people for need because they were unemployed.

Morris: So it was a massive eligibility--

Pomeroy: A massive eligibility operation and referral to work projects. There were some county work projects that already had been started which preceded CWA. The Civil Works Administration was the first of the work programs. There were some county projects that preceded that; not very many, but some. But as soon as the CWA projects got underway, then the function of the Relief Administration was the certification and referral of people to the work projects. If they were not able to be placed on work projects, they then became eligible for unemployment relief, as contrasted with public welfare. I am not sure at this point--my memory doesn't serve me here at all--I'm not sure that we were not still, in Los Angeles County, as far as direct welfare assistance was concerned, giving people rent orders and food orders and clothing orders and not direct cash relief.

Now, I don't know when that may have changed in Los Angeles, but I think the big distinction between unemployment relief and welfare assistance was still in the form of orders that meant everybody knew you were on welfare.

Morris: The relief operation, was that within civil service at that point?

Pomeroy: No, it was completely outside of civil service. I am trying to remember the point at which--I think that the Los Angeles County Relief Administration was always funded for its administrative costs by the State Relief Administration. I am pretty sure of that.

- Morris: In the standard book on Olson's administration,* one of the continuing complaints mentioned is that there were high administrative costs and high administrative salaries, which sounds like that was State Relief Administration funding. Where were you getting the people from to do this staffing as the program expanded?
- Pomeroy: My recollections are that we required college graduates but we did not require social-work training.
- Morris: There wasn't too much in the way of official social-welfare training then.
- Pomeroy: No, there was no school of social work at USC or UCLA. There was a school at Berkeley and, of course, there was Chicago, Columbia, and the New York School, et cetera. It was a recruitment of people who appeared to be qualified to do eligibility determinations primarily.
- Morris: Did the county offer any kind of training program? Did you get any kind of specific training other than on the job?
- Pomeroy: I am sure that we developed some elementary training within the organization, but I think it was pretty much in-service, on-the-job training. Los Angeles was fortunate in having as the chief of social service Emily Wooley, who was a trained social worker who had been with the American Red Cross. She was a colleague of Eva Hance, and she and Eva lived together for many, many years.

Emily was a superb influence, molder of people. She was warm and she was very professional, but she became a friend to her staff and went great distances to try and meet expectations and so on. Some of the young people who worked with her rose rather quickly to do sort of middle management administrative jobs under her supervision. I am sure that part of that process included the development of some training experiences.

We did reach a point in Los Angeles where we had as directors of our district offices, qualified, trained social workers. There was Lois Chalfont, there was Bea Copland; there were probably a dozen district offices and there were a dozen, almost entirely women, who were very good. There may have been one or two men, but that was, we felt a great accomplishment.

*Olson's New Deal for California, Robert E. Burke, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1953.

Morris: They came to you with a professional social welfare--?

Pomeroy: They had professional social welfare training and, as I say, some of them came out of Chicago. Eva and Emily Wooley both came out of Chicago, some others from the New York school.

Morris: Was Emily Wooley somebody that you worked with closely or did you come in some way under her guidance?

Pomeroy: No, I certainly came under influence, not working directly under her but rather working as the administrative assistant to the director.

Pomeroy: I found myself in all kinds of nooks and crannies, carrying his messages but doing it without having people feel that the administrative assistant was giving the orders. It was a very interesting opportunity to develop relationships.

By this time, I had built up a staff of my own. I had my own secretary and I had this battery of stenotypists and I had a couple of file clerks, so that I was not in what you would think of as a particularly limited job. I was dealing on behalf of the committee with things like the Workers Alliance (the first of the welfare rights organizations) and with people making protests and all that sort of thing.

Morris: There is a statistic that at that point, 60 percent of the people on relief [in the state] were in southern California. How did that affect the everyday day-to-day life of Los Angeles say?

Pomeroy: The figure that I remember that impacted us was the the fact that in 1937, 10 percent of the Los Angeles County population was on unemployment relief, and that was a hundred thousand people. The population was a million at that time. It had a graying affect. You were constantly conscious of the disastrous quality of the lives of a lot of people--when you talked to business people and lawyers and doctors and professionally-trained people who came and applied and got certified for unemployment relief. The most sought-after jobs were the clerical assignments, because these were things that some of these people who had been professionally trained could do and could do well. If they had to be put on the other end of a shovel, they were going to do it very badly.

This whole ambience is one in which you feel yourself torn--I can feel it all over again just talking about it--of just wondering how in the world things were going to change enough so that

these people could go back to living some kind of normal lives. When Mr. Roosevelt was elected, he closed the banks and we had a period of shock and then we had a period of hope that this process--

Morris: As his administration began to take hold?

Pomeroy: As it began to take hold. You went from thinking that people were going to have to get clothes orders and rent orders and so on, that at least they were going to have a little cash and they were going to have the dignity of paying their own bills.

Acting County Director

Pomeroy: Roy Pilling, who was our administrator and who, as I said, was very much my first real mentor, died very suddenly.

Morris: Was he an older man?

Pomeroy: He died in his fifties.

Morris: He was not an older man!

Pomeroy: [laughs] No, he was not an older man. He had suffered a great deal of stomach distress (it was undoubtedly tension and an ulcer) and he collapsed and lived very briefly and died in a coma in February, 1937.

The administrator by this time, by the way, was no longer Ray Branion. Ray Branion had moved on and was in Washington, D.C., as a special assistant to Harry Hopkins and Charles Schottland was appointed by Governor [Frank] Merriam; that would have been '34. Charles went, I think, to the Jewish Welfare Federation, sometime in 1936, I think, and then Merriam appointed Harold Pomeroy to succeed him as state relief administrator.

Morris: But those changes in the state relief administrator didn't particularly affect your part of the operation?

Pomeroy: Those changes, the Charles Schottland-Harold Pomeroy-Ray Branion, were all at the state level, and what we're talking about is Los Angeles County following Roy Pilling's death. Harold by this time was the state relief administrator, and it was Harold who with the committee were deciding on the appointment of the new director in Los Angeles who was going to succeed Roy Pilling. They made the appointment and it was a man by the name of Clayton Triggs. After

he accepted the position and while he was winding up other things (he was working in a field job for the federal government, I think), he contracted trichinosis, which was a long-term treatment condition. He was going to not be fit for work, according to the doctors, for a minimum of three months or possibly four or five.

The Los Angeles Committee, and the State Relief Commission by this time became involved in it, decided that they didn't want to engage anybody else as director, and so they named me acting director at the age of twenty-six.

Morris: That's quite a feather in your cap.

Pomeroy: It was 1937; I was twenty-six, yes. I was twenty-six and going to be twenty-seven the following September. It was very, very interesting. We had ten thousand employees, a lot of high-powered staff, controllers and social workers and managers of all kinds, colors, and descriptions. I, at the same time, received the assurance that when that assignment was completed, I would be given appointment to head one of the county offices in another part of the state. In other words, I would not have to fall back from being the acting director to being—

Morris: Who promised you that, somebody from the state administration?

Pomeroy: Harold Pomeroy.

Farmworker and Welfare Rights Organizing

Morris: When you say of all colors and conditions, what was the condition of color? Were there Negroes in numbers at that part of the--?

Pomeroy: Very few, but there were a few. I wish I could remember now--but only a few.

Morris: In the staff?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: How about in the clients--?

Pomeroy: Yes, but not anything like the war years because the the movement out of the South had not started.

Morris: How about Mexican Americans?

Pomeroy: Yes, some, but small numbers still.

Morris: And, across ethnic lines, the farm workers from the Dust Bowl?

Pomeroy: Yes, the people from the Dust Bowl in other parts of the state, not so much in Los Angeles. Of course, they had migrated primarily to those areas where they thought they had some possibility of employment related to what they knew something about.

Morris: I understand that farm employment was used quite heavily as a--

Pomeroy: Very heavily, very heavily, and there were lots of issues raised over it.

Morris: What kind?

Pomeroy: Primarily the issue that if people were applying for assistance in Los Angeles and had any kind of experience which would qualify them to be farmworkers, they could be offered a farmworker's job in Kern County or Tulare County and be required to take it or get off relief. This was an issue that the liberal groups that were becoming concerned about welfare rights--because this was the beginning of the welfare-rights organizations. The old Workers Alliance was the first manifestation of that--protesting the separation of families, for example. If a man were offered employment in Tulare County and his wife and kids didn't want to leave Los Angeles, you were still saying he had to go and accept that job. It was the beginning of some very difficult times.

Morris: From the board's point of view, was this a philosophical decision or was it a financial one, to make this kind of--?

Pomeroy: I think it was a mix. I think it was heavily influenced by financial considerations, but the philosophical consideration was that there was a need for farmworkers, and the board felt some responsibility socially to push people into that kind of employment.

Morris: If there were generally bad economic times, why were the growers having trouble finding people to work on the farms?

Pomeroy: Because, generally speaking, the people who were out of work were flocking to the cities hoping that they were going to (a) find some kind of help there, and (b) that they might possibly find jobs on projects like CWA or WPA [Work Progress Administration] and so on. There was much more of that in the cities than there was out in the rural parts of the state.

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Morris: It must have been difficult for the board, I would think, to function in that kind of situation where there were so many people out of work.

Pomeroy: Oh, it was a very difficult task that these people were asked to do. The only board member I remember very clearly was the man who became chairman of the State Relief Commission after he had been chairman in Los Angeles: Archibald B. Young. He was a delightful southern gentleman, a very, very warm and very wise person who believed that one should be able to work through problems and did not believe that the answer to people's distress lay in confrontation or in an attempt to evict them. It would be only as a last resort when a commission meeting was going to be completely disrupted that he would consent to having people removed from the meeting and that sort of thing.

Morris: How were public attitudes toward that kind of demonstration and confrontation?

Pomeroy: Pretty negative. The press, the Los Angeles Times obviously, deplored it. Most of the media, and we're talking only about radio and press, were not sympathetic. The general public gave one the feeling that people were pretty lucky that somebody was making an effort to do something for them and why were they creating all of this disturbance, please?

Private Agencies; Management Questions

Morris: How about the private agencies? Were they part of this effort?

Pomeroy: There was linkage with the private agencies, informal linkage through the social work staff. For example, Emily Wooley served on the Los Angeles County Council of Social Planning, of which Eva Hance was then the director. The private agencies had been, prior to the advent of any major public-assistance program, had been trying to meet, particularly with food and to some lesser extent with clothing, some of the emergency needs. They welcomed the big public agency with open arms and provided staff, in terms of making available some staff on leave and that sort of thing. The director of the Jewish Welfare Federation in Los Angeles at that time was a man by the name of Irving Lipsitch; he served on the State Relief Commission. He was without doubt the most eminent social worker in Los Angeles at that time.

- Morris: Were his ideas and the other private agency ideas helpful at all to your operation and its development?
- Pomeroy: I think they were very helpful. I think that those people did provide for the nonprofessionals, the lay people who were policy-makers, the first guidance that really laid down some criteria of dealing with people on the basis of human dignity and meeting their needs without subjecting them to undue pressure from meeting eligibility requirements. The social-work community was totally supportive of the need for establishing eligibility, but wanted to see it done in a nondegrading way and were invaluable in persuading some of the lay people to understand and accept this.
- Morris: There were differences of opinion then on the board?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, it wasn't hard to find the banker or the insurance man or the accountant who just wanted to have people go right down the line and take an oath with respect to every statement they made on it, and sell their jewelry and everything else before they could become eligible. That is an exaggeration probably, but there was on the part of some of the lay leadership, a sense, I believe, that somehow people were at fault because they were in this situation. The other side of the coin, obviously, that had to be interpreted was that many people were there through no fault of their own at all. That's the view that I think--the majority view that prevailed.
- Morris: This was--?
- Pomeroy: This was the cataclysmic economic situation that prevailed and people should not be made to feel that they were at fault.
- Morris: At what point did there begin to develop the concern about management problems in Sacramento and at what point did they begin to have an effect on how the county operated?
- Pomeroy: [pause] Those concerns stemmed primarily from the legislature. California was putting in a certain amount of money, not a lot but because the federal programs were--the heavily-funded federal programs--were predominantly what were meeting the needs. But as the legislature had to vote on appropriations of any kind, they did begin to raise questions, management questions, and the governor and his cabinet became the target for the legislative queries and some of the newspapers, the press in both Los Angeles and San Francisco, San Diego, Sacramento, the McClatchy press, even, in those days were occasionally heard to rise up in a critical voice.

Morris: Did this have an impact on your work in Los Angeles County? Did the Los Angeles legislators turn up and need to be explained to and persuaded?

Pomeroy: That, I think developed, but not while I was still in Los Angeles. I think that began to become much more evident with both congressional committees and state legislative committees by 1938-1939, by which time I was in Sacramento.

Morris: Okay, so you did your term as acting director.

III STATE RELIEF ADMINISTRATION, SACRAMENTO COUNTY

County Welfare Services; Some Differences of Opinion

Pomeroy: I did my term as acting director and then by September of '37 was named as the director of the Sacramento County office in the State Relief Administration and that, I guess, is where we better break. It's almost twelve, two minutes of.

Morris: All right, and thank you. I think that sets the picture.

[Interview 2: March 31, 1982]##

Morris: Last week, we had just gotten you on the way to Sacramento from the Los Angeles County Welfare Relief Department. You said it was Harold Pomeroy who worked out the agreement with you that you would be appointed to head another county after your interim service-- was that how you had gotten acquainted?

Pomeroy: Oh, we had known each other. When he was appointed state administrator, we all, of course, got to know him; and then he was heavily involved in my appointment as acting director in Los Angeles County. It was, of course, through our work in the State Relief Administration that I got to know him, yes.

Morris: It sounds then as if the state administration had quite a lot to do with how the counties operated.

Pomeroy: The county offices of the State Relief Administration were units of the State Relief Administration. They sometimes had different names. In Los Angeles, it was called the Los Angeles County Relief Administration. In Sacramento, it was called the Sacramento office of the State Relief Administration.

Morris: So that your contacts would be more with the state administrators and legislators rather than with the county board of supervisors?

Pomeroy: Yes, we had a liaison role at the county level with the county welfare departments, county supervisors, and other county officers.

Morris: How did that work? Was there much tension between the--

Pomeroy: It seemed to vary county by county. In Los Angeles County the relationships were excellent. In Sacramento County, during my tenure of nearly two years as the county director for the State Relief Administration, the relationships with Sacramento County officials were comfortable and good. We got into some policy disputes from time to time.

I remember particularly the issue of unemployment relief for strikers. It was state policy that we did not deny unemployment relief to people who were on strike. We provided unemployment relief on the basis of need, and the reason for the need was never an issue as far as we were concerned. The county welfare department would not extend direct relief to strikers, and so I was a hot issue.

The county welfare director in Sacramento County during my tenure for SRA was an incredible woman whose name was Mary Judge. She was not a trained social worker and very, very tough. They used to tell stories about Mary that she kept a revolver in the top drawer of her desk and a bottle of bourbon in the bottom!

Morris: I can see the need for the bottle of bourbon after a hard day with difficult cases. Was there need for a gun?

Pomeroy: Mary thought there was always the possibility that somebody would take a shot at her. Nobody ever did because [laughs] she was known to be armed.

Morris: Had she been in that office a long time?

Pomeroy: Many, many years; she was a legacy.

Morris: There had also been a couple of women who were directors of the state Department of Social Welfare. There was Rheba Splivalo.

Pomeroy: Rheba Crawford Splivalo, who was the associate of Aimee Semple McPherson in the Angelus Temple in Los Angeles and who was the appointee of Governor Rolph.

Morris: Did you have any contact with her? How effective was she--?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, I had considerable contact with Mrs. Splivalo because she was my neighbor in Los Angeles when I lived there, and at that time she was violently opposed to the emergency programs.

Splivalo had been known as the Angel of Broadway. She was a Salvation Army lassie when she was very young, very charismatic, knew really nothing about organized, professional social work or welfare. I have forgotten what the circumstances were of her appointment, but I know that it was very controversial because she was not felt to be a qualified person, and it was viewed as a highly political appointment.

Morris: Was it thought that her connections with Aimee Semple McPherson made her of the right kind of religious belief to make it a good thing?

Pomeroy: I don't know. I really don't know what the motivation was behind it except that she had attracted statewide attention in her role as a preacher in the Angelus Temple. She alternated with Aimee and shared the podium with her for a number of years.

Morris: So she was a lay preacher?

Pomeroy: I doubt that it was that sophisticated. I think here was a woman who was charismatic, a marvelous speaker, dynamic. She had been a very open critic of the previous administration in its administration of both welfare and unemployment relief. She consistently attacked them from her radio program, which was the Angelus Temple radio program. It was, I suspect, as a sort of a hyper-critic that she was turned to as being somebody that the new administration could use.

Morris: Mrs. Splivalo was appointed by Governor Rolph in 1931. And then in 1953, Frank Merriam appointed Florence Turner, who curiously had been president of the better Business Bureau in Fresno at one point.

Pomeroy: There is a marvelous story they tell about Governor Rolph and Rheba Crawford Splivalo, that she was in the gallery of the legislature and a personal attack was made on the governor, connecting him with her. My recollection is that the allegation was made that she was the governor's mistress. One of his aides flew to the corner office to tell the governor that this had happened, got there about two minutes before Rheba got there, and Governor Rolph rose to his feet, bowed, and said, "Madam, if it were true, it would be an honor!" That's a typical, I think, Governor Rolph story.

Morris: It sounds like him.

Pomeroy: So that was one of the highlights. I had forgotten Florence Turner completely.

Differing Welfare and Relief Policies

Morris: What I am curious about is the interaction between the relief administration and the existing welfare department, which I gather was pretty embryonic at that point.

Pomeroy: Yes, there was a clear separation of function and funding. The county welfare departments were still, as in Sacramento when I first went there, giving rent orders, grocery orders, and surplus clothing directly; and were not providing cash relief. The unemployment relief program was provided cash relief. There was obviously great feeling on the part of the recipients that cash relief was more acceptable than rent and grocery orders.

The counties were just beginning to become aware of how useful the unemployment relief program was to them in terms of relieving their financial burdens. So we were getting people certified by the county as being employable when indeed they were not, and that was one of the areas of difficulty between county and state relief officers.

Morris: Was there any thought ever or any effort to have the relief administration within the welfare department, either at the state level or at the counties?

Pomeroy: No, there was not. The federal government did not want unemployment relief integrated into the existing welfare system. I have to believe that was a calculated position of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in maintaining its identity through the states and down to the county.

Morris: There seems to have been also a sort of philosophical discussion between the idea that this was a temporary condition that would pass and then the other position that there would always be a number of people unemployed that the community couldn't find jobs for.

Pomeroy: I think two things served to keep the unemployment relief program separate. One was a political consideration, I believe, on the part of the federal government that it wanted to maintain its identification as the answer to the unemployment relief problem. The second consideration, which had to do with states and state finances, was that the state could visualize that if unemployment

relief were integrated into the local welfare operation, they would then have to assume more financial responsibility for them.

I think it was watched very carefully to avoid that, at least in California. How that may have applied in other parts of the country, I have no idea, but certainly there was a great deal of resentment in many quarters about the fact that California had become the target of opportunity for people who were unemployed elsewhere.

We saw the migration of people from the Dust Bowl, which was very real. We saw people who migrated from colder parts of the country, purely with the theory that at least if they were going to be hungry they could be hungry some place where it was much warmer than where they were.

So you had on the part of people who had lived in California for many years some real resentment that these people had moved in, and they were very often referred to in very uncomplimentary terms. When they talked about the Oakies and the Arkies, they talked about them with great intensity; that was particularly true through the San Joaquin Valley.

Morris: People had been coming to California for a hundred years, not just during the Depression.

Pomeroy: But they had not been coming in the numbers. I think if we look at population, the upsurge of needy people in the years from probably 1932 to 1940 maybe, that eight-year span, that we see a very high movement in of needy people and a good deal of resentment on the part of the population you would expect to resent it, the same people who complained later when the war was over because some of the people who had come out here to work on ships and who had come out here to work on airplanes didn't go back to where they came from.

Cleaning Up After Anti-Merriam Activists

Morris: How did there happen to be a vacancy in the Sacramento relief administration?

Pomeroy: All right. That was a lovely story! There had been a federal field representative for the Federal Transient Service. One has to remember that even in those less bureaucratic days, there were some very complex developments in terms of federal programs.

There was a whole element under Harry Hopkins' Federal Emergency Relief Administration in Washington called the Federal Transient Service that was separately funded to provide emergency relief for transients, for the people who had gained residence.

Morris: Was this the camps program?

Pomeroy: Partially the camps program and partially a direct assistance program including return to place of residence. That program was headed up in the western part of the United States by a man by the name of William Plunkert, who was the director of the Federal Transient Service for the western region, I think. He had made his headquarters in Sacramento and, as a more or less volunteer activity, had been active in organizing an employee-lobbying group made up principally of employees of the Sacramento office of the State Relief Administration.

It was a relatively small group, but it was a very active group. They were using the Sacramento office of the SRA, using its mimeograph, and using it as a place to meet, and conducting some very active anti-administration lobbying activities which came to the attention of Governor Merriam.

Morris: They were anti-Merriam?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, very anti-Merriam. Remember, this was a Republican state administration in a Democratic national world.

Morris: Wasn't there a time when any kind of public employee activism was prohibited? It wasn't until after World War II that you could be active in a political party.

Pomeroy: The Hatch Act had not yet been passed, as I recall, but all this had to do with the activity of state employees lobbying against a state administration for which they were working and by whom they were being paid. There was considerable resentment on the part of the governor's office.

Morris: It was political lobbying against the governor rather than for any specific program or--?

Pomeroy: Yes, and lobbying against the governor, lobbying against his relief policies, notably one which had to do with--the question of relief to strikers. The governor's office was about to make a pronouncement that he did not want his administration supporting strikes. These state employees were working with the few--a mere handful--of liberal members of the legislature.

Morris: Where was Harold Pomeroy in this controversy?

Pomeroy: Sitting right on the top of it and having to settle it. It was he who said finally that Mr. Plunkert had to go, had to get out of California, and that my predecessor in the Sacramento office had to go. Then I was put in to clean the thing up.

Morris: What an incredible task. How did you go about doing that?

Pomeroy: Well, interestingly enough, by salvaging most of the people who were involved in it, by getting them back onto the path of doing a job; starting out in an office where I was not wanted and the majority of the staff were very sympathetic with the objectives of this group that had been deposed.

Morris: The Plunkert people?

Pomeroy: Yes. So when I walked in I said, "We're not going to do anything around here until I know what is going on. There are not going to be any wholesale firings. I want to find out what is happening."

By the time I had been there less than a month, I was able to take two of the people who had been most prominently involved and decide that one of them was well enough qualified that he ought to be a senior case supervisor and another one was well-enough qualified so he ought to be an intake supervisor.

Morris: These were promotions?

Pomeroy: These were promotions for both of these people and effectively defanged them. They became marvelously loyal staff members and helped to turn the whole thing around. They were reasonable people, but they had been led by a man who was a communist sympathizer. Whether he was a Communist or not, he was a communist sympathizer. Bill and I many years later became very good friends; he comes back in the story many years later.

Morris: Mr. Plunkert?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: He didn't leave California?

Pomeroy: Oh, no, he left California, because he was certified to Mr. Hopkins as being persona non grata in California, Mr. Hopkins transferred him back to Washington.

Morris: Hopkins was willing to do that with complaints coming from a Republican.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, because he had a major stake in this operation. In fact, next to New York [it] was the largest operation in the country. He also did not want to be tarred with the--because Bill Plunkert was just too far over to the left. But, as I say, he comes back into my story much later in an entirely different role.

Morris: Did you find him a reasonable person aside from the political activism?

Pomeroy: Who?

Morris: Plunkert.

Pomeroy: Do you mean at the time?

Morris: Yes.

Pomeroy: I had no contact with him. I had known him before. He had been up and down the state setting up camps and doing a whole variety of things. But once we had cleaned out the operation in Sacramento and sort of torn it apart, I did not see him. He was not back in that area at all.

Morris: He just left. He didn't fight--

Pomeroy: There was no way to fight it, not when Washington said, "Come on back." He left.

Morris: You saw your job primarily as cleaning up the operation?

Pomeroy: That was the initial aspect of it. It was a pretty demoralized operation. Once the director was fired, the rest of the staff were trembling in their boots; it took a couple of months to get ourselves settled down so we were properly staffed and doing business.

Morris: How big of an operation was Sacramento County compared to L.A.?

Pomeroy: My recollection is that our staff in the Sacramento County office probably numbered between forty and fifty. We were probably administering to a caseload--I'd say perhaps ten thousand.

Morris: Did people stay in the county or was it a moving population?

Pomeroy: Both kinds. There was the basic county population, which was a combination of some agricultural, a number of canning factories, several minor industries. The total population of the county was

a hundred thousand and that tells me that my figure of ten thousand is probably high. It was maybe seventy-five hundred case-load and probably a staff of not more than forty, I think.

Camp Programs; Eligibility Decisions

Morris: Your unemployment was not as high as Los Angeles, which was approximately 10 percent.

Pomeroy: No, but in addition to the basic county population, where there was a level of unemployment they had never experienced before, we also had the migratory agricultural workers who moved through the county. We had some special problems with the single men who worked at some of the hardest of the farm labor and who presented--these were the people for whom finally we devised camp care as a better solution than cash relief since they were drinking their money away.

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Morris: How did the camp that was developed in your department differ from the Farm Security Administration camps that were located throughout California?

Pomeroy: My recollection is that the FSA camps were set up for families and had some schools connected with them. There was a real effort made to provide some kind of a decent living. They had medical care in connection with the camps, because I can remember the state director of medical care for FSA very well. Our single men's camps, on the other hand, were an effort to provide safe, clean housing and good food for single men between jobs; they did not provide the kind of amenities that were developed in connection with the FSA camps.

Morris: Where were they in Sacramento?

Pomeroy: They were not in the city itself but they were out in the county.

Morris: Now, were these developed while you were there or were they already there?

Pomeroy: They were in the process of development. They were operated out of the state office and our responsibility was to make referrals to them and to move the single men to them.

Morris: Was it sort of a grown-up Triple-C [Civilian Conservation Corps]?

- Pomeroy: No, not even that. Did it have any work component in it? I am not sure, Gaby, whether there was a work component in those or whether they were simply temporary housing, shelter, and food for single men between jobs.
- Morris: How did you deal with the drinking problem when it arose, you and the welfare department?
- Pomeroy: We didn't deal with it. The welfare department dealt with it. They dealt with it by not providing them with money and, therefore, they couldn't buy booze, so there was not a problem of drinking once they got into the camps. The camps became the resource that we offered for single men versus the cash relief that we had been offering and that was still being given in many other parts of the state.
- Morris: Were the camps concentrated in the Sacramento area?
- Pomeroy: No, there were some in Los Angeles County and there were some in Sacramento. I would think that there must have been one or two in Fresno. They served areas where there were concentrations of single laborers who were unemployed for primarily a seasonal basis.
- Morris: What did the clients think about this?
- Pomeroy: They didn't care for it at all, not a bit! The subject was one of protest. From time to time the Workers' Alliance or some concerned group would protest. But there were other, more major problems having to do with families and just the sheer magnitude of the unemployment problem made this particular aspect of it much less important, even as an issue.
- Morris: So in Sacramento County primarily the caseload was families rather than--?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, yes.
- Morris: As head of the county operations, did you yourself come in contact with people in need of aid?
- Pomeroy: Oh yes, I operated on the basis, even as I had in Los Angeles, of being willing to see anybody who had a complaint or who had a problem. There certainly was never a day that went by that you didn't have some particular problem that didn't quite fit all of the regs having to do with eligibility. So a caseworker or case

supervisor would say, "I wish you would talk to the person and see if you can help figure this out," that kind of thing. We were small enough so we were that close to it.

Morris: You got into the day-to-day--

Pomeroy: I got into the day-to-day operations, particularly in terms of trying to resolve questionable cases.

Morris: What kinds of questions--?

Pomeroy: One of the major things had to do with residence, because we had a state residence requirement. We were less rigid in our application of it than county welfare departments were, but when we had people who were non-residents we would give them temporary aid and then we had to offer them return to their place of legal residence.

Morris: That got to be fairly punitive in some cases?

Pomeroy: It got to be very punitive. We had a certain amount of authority to make exceptions, and this was where the attempt to exercise some kind of equitable judgment, when you have that kind of discretionary authority, becomes something you take pretty seriously. It becomes very difficult. It would have been much easier to say, "Let's take care of them here"--knowing that, for example, if you are returning somebody to Missouri, you are returning them to a standard that was a fraction of what ours was. If you had people that you felt were going to be seriously damaged from a health standpoint by being returned, then you would exercise whatever discretionary authority you had.

Morris: It sounds as if you were kind of looking for regulations to allow people to stay in California or to become eligible.

Pomeroy: My personal philosophy was that those people had made an enormous effort to come. Nobody picks up and just walks away from what they've grown up with without very good reason. The popular indictment that was leveled at people, that they were just looking for an easier, softer way, didn't impress me very much. I thought that people had come out of the depths of their concern for their children. This was almost the universal theme that ran through the people who had come from somewhere else.

Morris: The people in the Youth Authority in this period, I've heard say that they felt that the young people who had picked up and moved tended to be the strong ones, that they would leave home and come out to seek their fortune rather than be a burden in their families.

Pomeroy: I think that's a very fair assessment of it.

Morris: You would run into that kind of thing in the people who came through Sacramento?

Pomeroy: Yes, although the runaway youth did not fall into our hands. They were not considered part of the unemployment population until they were at least eighteen.

Olson's Election; Short Tenure as Northern County Field Representative

Morris: I think that probably half of our staff secretly supported Mr. Olson [laughs] and wanted him elected. They believed that, basically, a Republican administration was repressive. I did not agree with that, because I think we had an enormous amount of freedom to develop good programs for people and to administer programs with a pretty strong element of real humanity in it. Politically, I was aware--even though I was a registered Democrat and my first vote had been cast for Franklin Roosevelt--it was in the interest of what I believed in to support the present administration. We weren't going to stay in office if Merriam was not re-elected.

Morris: Even though the money was federal money, the state had pretty good autonomy to appoint--?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, the governor was remarkably supportive of the integrity of his State Relief Commission and his state relief administrator--remarkably. It was only when something was blatant as a far-left lobbying effort got right into his hair right in Sacramento that he rose up and protested, but he was really supportive. As it turned out, Olson did win. Dewey Anderson was Olson's first appointee as state relief administrator, and he just turned the thing upside down and shook it by its pockets.

Morris: Why? It sounds as if things were working reasonably well under difficult circumstances.

Pomeroy: It was.

Morris: Did Harold Pomeroy automatically submit his resignation?

Pomeroy: Yes, and it was immediately accepted. All of the top people who had worked under Harold at the state level and directors in the major counties also resigned or were fired. Olson was elected in

November and took office in January [1939]. I had had an appointment a few months before to the state staff, to be the northern California field representative.

Morris: I see, so you had actually moved out of the Sacramento office?

Pomeroy: I had actually moved out of Sacramento County, had nominated a successor who was appointed, and who, as a matter of fact, survived for a while because he was one of the men who had been part of the cabal that I had had to [laughs] break up.

Morris: The (quote) "Plunkert Group."

Pomeroy: Yes, the Plunkert group.

Morris: In other words, you nominated somebody who was in the department?

Pomeroy: Somebody in the office, and he was appointed and carried on nobly.

My resignation was asked for. I don't know why I got to feeling very obstreperous and I refused to resign [as field representative].

Morris: Did you?

Pomeroy: Yes! I did some sort of fun things. I had become very friendly with the correspondents for the Los Angeles Times and the Los Angeles Examiner who were located in Sacramento. I had the eighteen northern counties, which was fascinating, really just fascinating, and while I was returning to Sacramento from a field trip, I called ahead and I got ahold of these two newspapermen. I can no longer remember their names, which grieves me because I remembered them for a long time. While driving back I had hit a pheasant on the road, a beautiful bird, and being very practical I had picked up the pheasant, and I brought it down to the chef at the Senator Hotel and had him brew up a beautiful pheasant dinner for my two newspaper friends while we plotted how they were going to help me in my campaign to stay on the job.

Morris: [laughs] What did they suggest?

Pomeroy: They did some very cute stories and they got some editorials written--oh, somebody who was competent and caring and all kinds of good things--was being forced out by the new administration and that it was the spoils system and how rotten it was and so on. So we kept that going for a while. But finally all of the chips were down, and I was either going to resign or be fired; so I rounded up another job and resigned.

Morris: Go back a minute and tell me about the eighteen northern counties and how they differed from the urban scene and what you could do about it.

Pomeroy: We did not have SRA offices in every county. By this time, we were working on some reimbursable arrangements with some county welfare offices for unemployment relief in some of the smaller counties. You got up to Plumas County by driving to Reno and then the back road up to Quincy. Just one complete trip around to all of those counties in the three months that I was in that job.

Morris: Was the reimbursement thing something that was worked out from Sacramento, or did the counties come in and say, "We need some help."

Pomeroy: It was worked out from the state office of SRA in San Francisco with the counties, in terms of their certified-unemployable group. They simply, on the state funding basis that unemployment relief was being administered directly by SRA when caseloads were certified by the counties, the State Relief Administration reimbursed the county for aid to that group on that basis. In my opinion, it was not a terribly good arrangement because it still left the counties with administering the dual system, which caused trauma. When you looked at Yuba, Sutter, and Butte counties, you had some real problems.

When you got into smaller counties, I couldn't prove it but it has always been my belief that the counties administered exactly the same program to everybody and just billed the state for what they could collect in terms of unemployment relief.

Morris: That sounds like a very agile--

Pomeroy: Yes, and if they were doing that, I was never going to question it because it seemed to me to be a much more sensible thing to do than to try to have a direct relief food, clothing, and shelter program here and a cash program there, because I think it is appalling.

I did not get to know the personalities in all of those eighteen northern counties in the three months that I served in that capacity, but it was a fascinating taste of northern, rural California.

Morris: Did you find it that much different from what you were familiar with?

Pomeroy: Totally different; absolutely, totally different. Talking first of all about relatively small groups of people and talking about a very different attitude, a very caring--somehow we've got--and

really in some counties, part-time county welfare administrators-- a supervisor who would be administering a county welfare program on a part-time basis.

Morris: When you say supervisor--?

Pomeroy: County supervisor, an elected county supervisor, and I can't tell you which county. It was one of the smaller; it was the smallest county, I guess, in the north and the east, right up in the corner.

Morris: Around Alturas?

Pomeroy: Alturas maybe. They simply divided up the county chores that had to be done and each of the supervisors took one or two. They had no paid staff.

Morris: That's really remarkable.

Pomeroy: It doesn't happen any more, I'm sure!

Morris: Even the small counties, I would think, have county administrators--

Morris: Oh, I think absolutely, even on a part-time--somebody will be a part-time county administrator and part-time county planning officer or something like that, but they've all got to have paid staff because they have to relate to Sacramento.

Federal Oversight; Artists' and Writers' Projects

Morris: You mentioned the state headquarters in San Francisco. I came across a mention that, at one point, it was moved to Los Angeles.

Pomeroy: Not as a state headquarters, not during my time. The state headquarters was always in San Francisco. The state headquarters of WPA was at 49 Forest Street in San Francisco, and the SERA program was headquartered on New Montgomery Street.

Morris: Why did they settle in San Francisco rather than in Sacramento?

Pomeroy: There was no room for them in Sacramento, no space, and San Francisco was much easier access for the federal people who were coming and going at a great rate.

Morris: They were? There was a strong federal--

Pomeroy: Oh, we saw a lot of the federal field people. There were general field representatives, there were federal welfare people, there were federal supply people, there were Federal Transient Service people. They came and went in great numbers.

Morris: Why?

Pomeroy: Because the Federal Relief Administration--Mr Hopkins, Inc.--was administering this nationwide program and they were doing it through states, but they kept a warm and loving hand or a heavy hand, whichever you choose to--

Morris: Because it was new and they were uncertain of what they were doing?

Pomeroy: Because it was new, and particularly because in California you had a Republican administration during all of the time that I was associated with it; the Democratic administration was going to make sure that they were doing right by these poor people. It was very carefully watched.

Morris: So there was some political tension there. The Democrats weren't sure what the Republicans were going to do with it out here?

Pomeroy: My sense always was that the federal field people respected the quality of the program that had been developed in California, but they felt an obligation to observe it because it was a major, very large program--so that if there was any adverse politicizing of it that they would be aware of it.

Morris: Was there any of the thing that one hears a lot about now of picking up ideas from how things were being done in California that might be useful, either to the overall federal planning or to administration in other states?

Pomeroy: I think that there was some of that, Gaby, but basically my sense is that the federal programs were so hard pressed to operate, that they weren't thinking too much about how they could improve. So that while I think that there were people on the federal staff who were looking for creativity in the hope that they could perhaps relate that to other programs in other communities, it wasn't a major activity.

Morris: Were they thinking that there were going to continue to be public programs on scales that there hadn't been before that needed a base line of how you put them together and how you operate them ?

Pomeroy: I don't know the answer to that. They may well have been believing that this was the beginning of what was going to be a permanent part of the social structure in this country, but what happened was that World War II came along and changed radically what could be done. The areas in which I think there was a great deal of hope and a lot of belief that this could be the beginning of continuing federal programs were the arts projects, the music projects, and the writers' projects, because this was the first experience in our country of some subsidy with dignity for the creative people. It was done, to my way of thinking, with a real magnificence. I think those projects--

Morris: Did you have any contact with some of those?

Pomeroy: Oh yes, we were all so delighted to see this kind of thing happening that we made the opportunity to relate ourselves to them in any way that we could and, of course, we were constantly on the lookout for the qualified people that we could refer to them for employment, both in Los Angeles and in Sacramento.

Morris: Did you find many people?

Pomeroy: Oh yes, oh yes, in relation to the total. You wouldn't say many-- at one time I knew the figures, but I certainly don't remember any more. We probably could find them because, to me, those were the very exciting--the Dong Kingmans, for goodness sake! The National Theater Project, its extension into the states. There was a lot of magnificent art that came out of that period. The state guides, produced as the American Guide series, are one of the best efforts that has ever been made to document our country on a whole total basis.

I had been particularly aware of them from Los Angeles where they got early impetus. Then, because I used to spend a lot of my weekends in San Francisco from Sacramento (I wouldn't say a lot of them, but a good many of them), I got to know the people on the state theater staff.

Morris: They all related to each other then?

Pomeroy: Yes, yes, and related to the state. There was some linkage between the state WPA, the Works Project Administration, [which] was a separate body from the State Relief Administration. It carried out the work program. All of the creative projects were a part of the WPA, and so the state heads of those programs worked under the state WPA administrator. The state relief administrator and the WPA administrator had a rather close working relationship.

Morris: Sending people back and forth and dealing with the same people from Washington.

Pomeroy: Yes, yes.

Morris: That sounds very productive.

Pomeroy: Oh, it was.

Morris: A couple of more questions on Olson's impact. I have come across references to the California Conference of Social Work as having been active in his campaign and writing position papers on social issues. Were you aware of any of that?

Pomeroy: That was before I had any identification with the organization. I knew about it; I knew about the California conference, probably was a dues-paying member, but had not had any involvement at committee or board level and indeed was not aware that they were supportive of Olson. [tape interruption: telephone rings]

IV FROM DEPRESSION RELIEF TO WARTIME EMPLOYMENT##

Harold Pomeroy

Morris: By this time, had Harold Pomeroy become important to you personally?

Pomeroy: Yes, he had. By this time, we had known each other quite a few years and had become good friends. He had been separated from his family for some years, so at that point there was no thought of marriage.

After he left the State Relief Administration, he went to work for the Associated Farmers which was then absolutely the most reactionary group of its kind. They were utterly opposed to the idea of relief for farmworkers. Harold went with them under the mistaken notion that he could make a change in its course. One of their board members was a man he had known and had respected, so he went with them as executive director. He had hopes for a while, but it obviously wasn't going to work.

Then, through having known people in the Sacramento Housing Agency, he went to Washington and was with the National Housing Agency for a few months. It was less than a year before he went with the American Red Cross.

Morris: By the time he was in Washington, you were thinking of getting married?

Pomeroy: We were; and of course, that meant I wanted to be located in Washington.

Morris: Tell me something about Harold Pomeroy. Would you say his skills were primarily as an administrator or as a social worker?

- Pomeroy: He was definitely an administrator--one of the finest I've ever known, although he had great compassion too. He felt that it was important to see that the job was done well and that it could be done without involving politics. But, when necessary, he could be very effective politically.
- Morris: Not political in the partisan sense? Doing a job well could also be politically effective?
- Pomeroy: Yes. He had been a small-town mayor in southern California before he came to Sacramento, so you know he was a good Republican. You'd call him a cautious liberal; very concerned about fiscal responsibility.
- Morris: Was the money ever a problem while you were county director? Would the state director or the legislature or the county supervisors ever say, no, you can't spend any more this month or this quarter?
- Pomeroy: Only on administration was there ever a question.
- Morris: That's the constant cry in public administration, isn't it; the cost of overhead?
- Pomeroy: Often. No, we never had to turn anyone away for lack of funds, although it came close a few times. That came later, after I was out of the department. It was the next governor, Olson, who had all that land on him when he came into office.

California Physicians' Service Organized

- Morris: You didn't go to Washington till 1942, and you left the relief administration in early 1939. What did you do next?
- Pomeroy: I left the State Relief Administration in February of '39, went to work for the California Physicians' Service which was then being organized by the medical profession in California as the first statewide prepaid health care plan in the country.
- Morris: Was Lawrence Arnstein involved in that?*

*See Lawrence Arnstein, "Community Service in California Public Health and Social Welfare," 1964, and Russel Lee, in Earl Warren and Health Insurance, 1943-1949, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, 1971.

Pomeroy: No.

Morris: And Russel Lee?

Pomeroy: No, Russel Lee had his own thing going in Palo Alto and had been a burr under the saddle of organized medicine in California. No, Alson Kilgore, Ray Lyman Wilbur, and T. Henshaw Kelly were the ones I worked with. Ray Lyman Wilbur was chairman of the board and these other gentlemen were the moving spirits.

Morris: Wilbur had been a welfare administrator for Hoover, hadn't he?

Pomeroy: I did not know that or if I knew it, had forgotten about it. He was at Stanford and was persuaded by the liberal members of the CMA [California Medical Association] that this was a very worthwhile thing for him to devote himself to.

Morris: You mentioned some medical payments. Wasn't there a medical bureau somewhere within the federal relief administration?

Pomeroy: The Farm Security Administration had a medical program that was a part of its program, but that had no--

Morris: I mention Arnstein because he talks about something like that that he was involved in and he links it up as a forerunner and inspiration for the California Physicians' Service.

Pomeroy: [laughs] Larry and I should get our stories together.

My recollections have to do with the fact that in Michigan there had been started a limited prepaid plan of some kind. Dr. Alson Kilgore, who was a San Francisco surgeon, was a very practical, politically-wise member of the CMA board of governors. It was his foresight that suggested, that because of what the Farm Security Administration had done, because of what could be seen around the country, that the doctors themselves should initiate a program and indeed they did. They had to fight their way through CMA, and they had to fight their way through AMA [American Medical Association], and they even had to fight within their own board. They found themselves faced from time to time with some people of differing views.

But Ray Lyman Wilbur provided the stature to head this thing up that really took it above some of the dog fights. He made an enormous contribution, in my view, to that. I was their first paid employee.

Morris: That's really unique. Earl Warren recalls that he offered some unofficial legal advice to an East Bay contingent of doctors that was interested in this plan.* Does that have the ring of possibility?

Pomeroy: It has indeed the ring of possibility, and I wonder whether Mr. Warren's advice was to support the program or to help undermine it.

Morris: He recalls that it was to help it get started.

Pomeroy: Well, his hand wasn't very useful at that point, because one of the most difficult members of the first board of directors was a physician from the East Bay and I have gone blank on his name. But the reason I sort of pinpoint it and see it in my mind's eye, somewhere I had started collecting some little ceramic and fuzzy skunks that I had on my desk, and Alson Kilgore used to come in and he'd look at them and he'd say, "Well, let's name this one so-and-so." One of them was named for our friend across the bay who may have been the one Earl Warren talked to.

The legal counsel for the California Physicians' Service was located here in San Francisco. It was a man by the name of Hartley Peart. His associate was Hap Hazzard, and Hap Hazzard is still alive and well.

I still occasionally run into him. He was a young sprout at that time. Hap and I might be close to being the same age.

Morris: As the one paid employee, were you writing letters exhorting people to join?

Pomeroy: I was very quickly thereafter. They hired me and then they hired a man by the name of A.W. Widnom to be their general manager; he is no longer alive. He was responsible for developing the plan for the marketing of the services. The doctors themselves were working out in committee things like fee schedules and so on and had some actuarial advice. I can't remember who that was. Hap might remember. But an effort obviously was being made to--and the whole thing was set up on a unit basis of payment. The unit was to be arrived at by dividing the income into the number of units of service and disbursing it to the physicians on that basis.

I had about three principal jobs: one, I served as secretary of the board, so that I was involved at that point in everything that happened from there. I was responsible for organizing the office and in that capacity was able to suggest to the board the man who had been the personnel director for the State Relief

Administration in Los Angeles County, whose background and training was accounting. He became their first accountant, a man by the name of Bryant Kelly, also dead.

Health Insurance for State Employees

Then the third thing that I did was, because I had been a state employee, I negotiated the first state employee contract with California Physicians' Service. I knew some of the people on the State Personnel Board and knew my way around state government enough so that I did that.

Morris: Was that controversial?

Pomeroy: I don't think so, no. I think it was controversial in one way, yes, because up to that time all state health insurance had been indemnification sold by whoever the current insurance carriers were. The doctors were paid directly by the employees when they were reimbursed by the insurance company. The doctors, of course, preferred to be paid directly by the employees in preference to accepting unit payment, which they knew was going to be at a lower level than what they would charge the individual patient.

Morris: Did you have health insurance as a state employee when you worked for them?

Pomeroy: An interesting question; I don't remember. I do not remember whether health insurance was one of our benefits or not.

Morris: Or whether it was generally available--?

Pomeroy: I rather doubt it now that you raise the question. It may be that the state employees' contract with CPS was the first offering of health insurance to state employees.

Morris: That's what I am curious about.

Pomeroy: This could be.

Morris: Did this contract cover all state employees?

Pomeroy: I don't remember that. I would think not. I think it probably covered state employees in the northern California area because our organizing efforts were concentrated initially in northern California, although we had southern California board members and there was every intention to operate on a statewide basis.

- Pomeroy: Yes. I'm not sure about employers. General public response clearly was--as the result of the whole Depression experience, there was a high sensitivity to the importance of some way to take care of medical costs, including the cataclysmic, catastrophic things that face people.
- Morris: Was it generally an individual approach?
- Pomeroy: No, it was entirely a group approach.
- Morris: From the beginning?
- Pomeroy: From the beginning, it was totally group. The initial effort was totally group.
- Morris: If the employers didn't like it, were there ways for individuals to become a group?
- Pomeroy: No, there were not. No, and employers were beginning to be sensitive to the fact that these were the kind of benefits--I'd like to pick up somewhere on when the first health insurance--group health insurance plans--were offered by major insurance companies.* The dates when those started would have some relevance in terms of how CPS developed.

Marriage and the War Effort

- Morris: You stayed with CPS--
- Pomeroy: I stayed with that until January of '41 when my true love was in Washington. By this time I wished to be there too. That was the intent, and that was when I, as a result of Harold's efforts and the efforts of one or two friends, was offered a job with WPA and took off in my little Ford convertible and traveled cross country.

*Private insurance of hospital costs began in the 1930s, although some mutual medical insurance had existed in Europe and Great Britain in the late 19th century in the form of workers' associations, medical clubs, and friendly societies.

Morris: Was that the first time you had been--?

Pomeroy: No, I had been in Washington with my first husband to see his family in about '34, I guess, and we had flown across the country, which was a great adventure, and driven back. We picked up a new car in Detroit and drove it home.

Morris: Were you making plans to remarry in 1941 when you went to Washington?

Pomeroy: Yes, making plans to remarry, and it was necessary for me to work because Harold had two children that he was supporting. We were married about a year after I got to Washington.

I went to work for WPA, helping to liquidate the women's program project, which they were having to do because of the impetus that needed to be given to people to accept war industry employment. They were having difficulty closing down WPA projects. People were reluctant to leave the safe haven of government employment to go to work in defense industries, and so it became necessary to negotiate with state governments and get projects closed in order to face people with the reality that they were needed in wartime jobs.

I did that for about nine months and then was offered the opportunity to join the National Housing Agency staff working on community organization in connection with war housing.

Morris: Why don't we stop there for today. I don't want to wear you out and me.

Pomeroy: Yes, that's a good breaking point.

[Interview 3: April 14, 1982]##

Morris: When we left off last time, you were just going to Washington and just getting married to Harold Pomeroy. What struck me is that in California, in that period from late 1940 to 1941, reemployment and defense work had moved the relief rolls from their highest totals in late 1940 to practically nil by mid-1941. What happened to all the staff that had been built up?

Pomeroy: My recollection is that the dispersal of the unemployment relief staff was a very gradual process. As WPA projects were terminated and people began to go into the defense industry, the people who were running WPA projects went in two directions. They either went into private industry, which offered lots of opportunities at that point, or the county welfare departments were beginning to build up their staffs in a more professional manner than many of them had been prior to the development of the unemployment relief

programs. So some of them went in that direction.

Morris: Did you consider some of those options yourself?

Pomeroy: No, the only option I considered was going to Washington because Harold was in Washington. That was easy at that point.

Morris: Did you yourself have a sense that you wanted to be part of the war effort anyway?

Pomeroy: Yes, I think if Harold had not gone into the army, been commissioned in the army, I think I might well have opted for the WACs [Women's Army Corps]; applied for officer training.

Morris: And at that point, the army wouldn't take a husband and wife?

Pomeroy: I think they might have, but I didn't think it was economic. Harold was going into the army at a fraction of the salary he had earned as an administrator, and there was no way in which his army salary--In fact, my income met his family support obligations during the entire period of World War II.

Morris: That's quite a lot to take on yourself.

Pomeroy: Yes. So I really didn't have the option. I had taken on that obligation, so I had no option of going into the army.

Morris: Did he go into a job in the army where he could use his administrative experience?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. Let's see, we were married in '42 and he went into the army within six months. We were married in January and by June he was in the army, commissioned for military government, went into training at Charlottesville, Virginia, at the University of Virginia, and was there until he was sent overseas.

Morris: I think of military government in the postwar era when the American military was helping European cities re-establish--

Pomeroy: But they trained for the occupation; they were trained for the occupation.

Morris: As early as 1942?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, and they went with the fighting troops. Harold was in England prior to the invasion of France. He then was sent to North Africa and was in on the invasion of Italy at Salerno. The majority of the military government people were attached to the fighting units. He went all through Italy with Mark Clark's Fifth Army and on into Vienna with Clark's Fifth Army.

National Housing Agency

Morris: When you joined the housing agency, what stage was it in?

Pomeroy: The National Housing Agency had been formed by putting together the Public Housing Agency, FHA, and Home Owners Loan Corporation. Those three departments of government had been lumped together under the National Housing Agency. There was an administrator and the office of the administrator of the National Housing Agency was the unit that was primarily concerned with war housing.

The war housing program was a melange of community effort to utilize to the maximum existing housing and to work with the Defense Department and the War Production Board on the identification of war impacted areas--defense impacted areas--where industries were developing for which housing was needed.

The tiny small part that I played in that was as a community organizer for what was called the home use program. That involved working through the eight regional offices of the National Housing Agency to go into individual communities and work with local authorities in setting up war housing committees, to mobilize citizen support for a war housing program. Primarily the part that we were working on in the Homes Use Agency was getting people in communities where there was a dearth of housing to open up their homes, take in people, to share homes, and to convert--the major impact was to convert--

Morris: Unused space into apartments?

Pomeroy: Into apartments, yes.

Morris: That's interesting. The residual conversions in the city of Berkeley are still a problem that is talked about! [laughs]

Pomeroy: I'm sure, and this is true in Sausalito. The house that I owned in Sausalito had a nonconforming use and I got into a real hassle when I went to sell the house because it was a wartime conversion.

Morris: Were there difficulties in staffing these housing programs? Was everybody going into either the military or the defense industry?

Pomeroy: No. As I recall, we were a very small staff. We were a field staff of I think four or five people. Three of us were women, and there were some opportunities [that were] opened up for women that probably would not have occurred if the men were not being drawn into the military.

Morris: Had those other three women come from similar kinds of background?

Pomeroy: A comparable background--one of them from a nonprofit agency; community chest work, I think. Another one had been with WPA also in an administrative capacity. I've forgotten the fourth one.

Morris: Who was the administrator?

Pomeroy: John Blanford was the National Housing Agency administrator and the director of the homes use program was Philip Klutznick, a gentleman who has since distinguished himself in a variety of ways, most recently as secretary of commerce under Carter; a marvelous man.

Morris: How did they feel about this program?

Pomeroy: They were delighted to have--I don't know who the creator of that program was because I moved into it after it had been set up, and I don't know who was responsible for designing it. But at that time the White House and the National Housing Agency were very supportive of any program that might mobilize citizen concern and result in reducing the amount of new housing that had to be done.

Morris: Public housing as a program was fairly new in that era and I wondered if it was possible to build any kind of civilian housing.

Pomeroy: Civilian housing--there was public war housing thrown up all over the country. The worst example of it was Hunter's Point; I mean the worst example of it here was Hunter's Point. But we had it all over the country. The moment that you turned on the lights and had the water running, the people, who had been living under intolerable circumstances, thought it was wonderful, but a year later we began to look at it and it was pretty shoddy stuff because it was thrown together awfully fast.

As I recall, in some areas there were lots of quonset huts, lots of those, and a lot of them were used for defense workers' housing. I don't recall seeing any of them around here because I didn't do any appreciable amount of work in California. I worked in the eastern region, but I came out here a couple of times.

Community Organizing

- Pomeroy: I primarily worked in New York, Texas, and Chicago. Being shuttled around from region to region where I worked with the regional staff in going in to local communities setting up war housing committees.
- Morris: Were there any particular things going on in New York or Texas or Chicago?
- Pomeroy: It was just the assignments as to which region. We had no territorial breakdown. We all covered any part of the country where a regional director said, "I need one of the field staff to help me on this project," going in and setting up a circuit that we'd ride of maybe working in half a dozen different communities over a period of a week or ten days.
- Morris: Was this a new kind of technique at that point?
- Pomeroy: It was new to housing. To my knowledge, it was new to the federal government, because what WPA had done was to work entirely through existing governmental organizations, state and local. Here was the housing agency with regional offices in about eight different places in the country going into local communities and asking mayors to help them set up war housing committees in order to help facilitate housing for people who would be coming into these communities because of the war effort. I think it was a pioneer operation.
- Morris: Could you pick one community where you did this that you recall and briefly describe how you went about it and what kinds of people you encountered and their reaction?
- Pomeroy: I can draw a picture of what we did, but I can't focus on a specific community because they were [laughs] lots of places that nobody had ever heard of before, because this was where they were putting the defense plants.

The process was one of going in, making arrangements beforehand either by phone or by letter, to make an appointment to see the mayor. These were all done on either a city basis or where there were a number of small communities directly involved with the same defense plant.

There would be an effort made to form a county committee, for example, but primarily it meant making a date, going in and talking with the mayor, describing to the mayor what the purpose of the program would be-- to expand the use of existing housing was primarily the purpose--and then to suggest that the mayor

appoint a committee and that he enlist people from the churches, people from the real estate industry and from the banks--because where you were going to convert housing there were going to be bank loans needed to finance the conversions. Builders, and some other identifiable citizen leadership in the community was also needed.

Morris: The community decision makers.

Pomeroy: Yes. The mayor would be asked to make the appointment of the committee. After it was formed, you would come back and when the mayor got his committee ready, to come back and meet with the committee and outline to them the purposes for which they were being asked to organize and to provide them with some of the PR materials that had been developed through the housing agency and to offer assistance from the various elements of the National Housing Agency staff.

If there were FHA or Home Owners Loan Corporation or federal housing people nearby, they had been co-opted by the administrator and asked to share in this development to the extent that they could. So you moved around among those people to find somebody who felt that it was a worthwhile effort, and tapped into that person to work with the community.

Morris: That's really a remarkable accomplishment.

Pomeroy: Yes, it was a fascinating process.

Morris: This sounds as if the normal work of, say, the FHA was kind of in suspense.

Pomeroy: No, FHA was still insuring loans and the Homeowners Loan Corporation was still providing housing and Federal Public Housing (FDHA) was still building houses.

Morris: What kinds of responses did you get then when you went back to meet with the committees that they had set up?

Pomeroy: Generally very warm, very supportive--more so on both coasts. The center of the country reflected, in the early days particularly, an isolationist viewpoint. There were times when we found that we were sailing in very rough water.

Morris: Isolationist in terms that they weren't interested in participation in the war, not feeling that this was going to be in the long run an economic asset to the community to have a defense plant?

- Pomeroy: No, no, no, no--you know, editorials in small country newspapers in the middle part of the country. This was not true in areas like Dearborn, Michigan and Gary, Indiana. When we went into those communities we got an enormous amount of support because they recognized that their peacetime industry had to convert and therefore anything that was going to facilitate that conversion they were going to support because it meant employment.
- Morris: Had Dearborn and Gary been hard hit during the Depression period, just as it is now?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, and they saw steel mills begin to come back, the automobile industry begin to come back and build tanks.
- Morris: How did you deal with the communities that did not want this kind of housing program?
- Pomeroy: One thing was true throughout and that was you put most of your effort where there was an indication that you could make some progress. If there were communities where the public officials dragged their feet, at some point you might go back and make some more effort to get them going, but there were plenty of places where there was willingness and eagerness to share in the war effort, so that you really devoted most of your efforts to the places where they wanted you. I would think some of us never knew what didn't happen in some of the other places.
- Morris: I can believe that when you've got the whole thing--
- Pomeroy: Spread out all over, and it was the placement of war industry plants--obviously, there were lots of people, I'm sure, who devoted a lot of effort to trying to figure out strategically where they should be. There was a real effort to spread them out all over the country. I assume that had something to do with the defense posture of not concentrating all of our production effort in any single area, both from the standpoint of available manpower and also from a defense standpoint, we were less of a target.
- Morris: You also wonder if some of the strategy did have to do with economics.
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes.
- Morris: How about any contacts that you would have with congressmen, local representatives who were interested either in helping this or had other agendas and therefore were involved?
- Pomeroy: Really very little sense of involvement of the national legislators. Again, we were operating, I would say 70 percent of the communities that we were in were relatively small communities that

had been heavily impacted. You put an airplane production factory employing ten thousand people next door to a community of five thousand people, the impact is just horrible.

Morris: I have been thinking since we started talking about this of Red Stevenson's description of the north Richmond area that he came into right after the war and found that there--*

Pomeroy: Unbelievable.

Morris: There were real problems both for the pre-existing city leadership and also real problems for the people who had relocated there.

Pomeroy: Yes, absolutely, and you multiply that all over the country.

Morris: After you got these community committees working and the housing going, did you do any follow-up at all? Were there any requests for help on assimilating all of these people?

Pomeroy: No, I wouldn't say we were that much involved in that, but the regional offices of NHA were--we had sort of a continuing string of requests from the regional offices for the field people from Homes Use to come back into some of the communities where things had been started and see whether or not we could further them, move them along a little more.

Morris: The idea was that these committees should stay operative as long as--?

Pomeroy: To stay operative as long as there was the semblance of a critical housing situation.

Morris: How did the people who signed on to these committees feel about this kind of a coordinated effort?

Pomeroy: I felt that it was in general a very positive reaction from them, the feeling that here was the federal government really trying to do something to help. And the fact that there was some coordinated effort made to develop the financing pattern for conversions encouraged them; those were insured loans that the banks could make. There was a positive effort.

Morris: The local banks, were they involved in carrying the--?

*See E.P. Stephenson, in Bay Area Foundation History, vol. 5, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, for conversion loans. I think in many of the committees there was an inevitable share of people on the committees, certainly a minority, who really weren't at all excited about seeing their pleasant little city invaded. But in the main there was acceptance of the fact that there was a real need for this and that the important thing was to get it done, to get people housed.
- Morris: Were there any questions raised about the kinds of people that were going to be moved into their areas?
- Pomeroy: [pause] Sure there were. I don't recall it as being a significant thing that affected the usefulness of the program.
- Morris: I guess I was thinking about the Bay Area where there were large numbers of black people brought out here to work in the shipyards.
- Pomeroy: Of course, the same thing was true in all of the southern states that I worked in--Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, the Carolinas. We were still in that period when segregation was an accepted fact and there was the assumption that adequate provision would be made for all of these people in the appropriate manner.
- Morris: Appropriate meaning segregated?
- Pomeroy: Oh, absolutely.

Public Attitudes; Un-American Activities Committee

- Morris: Among the staff people who were working on this and got a broader view, do you recall any sense that this might indeed cause some major changes in patterns of American communities?
- Pomeroy: No, I think we were too immersed in the reality of the day-to-day impact of the war effort to speculate.
- Morris: To have time for great philosophical--
- Pomeroy: Not really, no. Our philosophical contemplation had to do with the rights and wrongs of Hitler's war.
- Morris: I was wondering if the events of the war itself, American actions and defeats and victories as they came along, were a part of your consciousness?
- Pomeroy: Oh, very much so. The American role in the war was an overriding consideration. Without that you would not have had the motivation for production. Certainly during the period when President

Roosevelt was seeking to funnel needed wartime materiel into Britain before Pearl Harbor, the American support for what he was doing was very spotty. But once we were in the war the basic American attitude was: we've got to stay in it, we've got to win it.

Morris: How about philosophical anti-war feeling? Was that in evidence at all?

Pomeroy: Very, very little. I think one of the reasons the opposition to the Vietnam War hit so many people with great shock was because those of us who had been totally aware of community attitudes and individual attitudes during World War II had not seen that before. We had not experienced anything like that before and it took the whole Vietnam experience to bring us to the point of understanding that this could happen. There was opposition [to World War II] but it was not manifested with the type of opposition to war that Vietnam produced.

Morris: In any sense of an organized--

Pomeroy: No, there were groups in different parts of the country, but they attracted and received very little attention.

Morris: One stray thought occurs to me. You said there wasn't much visibility of congressmen. Was Senator [Harry] Truman's watchdog committee on defense production visible at all?

Pomeroy: They were visible, but not specifically in relation to what we were doing. We were generally very small potatoes and the Congress had more important things to do.

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Pomeroy: I had one absolutely marvelous experience on a train that I will never forget. It was the overnight train from Washington to Chicago. I went into the club car when I got on the train, about six-thirty, and I had a drink and was looking at Time magazine, which had a picture of Martin Dies on the cover and a story about the Un-American Activities Committee of which he was chairman.

I was muttering and saying, "That horrible man, that horrible man, how can he do these things?" I heard this voice next to me say, "Pardon me, but are you speaking about that story in Time?"

I said, "I certainly am. I think that man Dies is so willful and so vicious in his attacks on people. I cannot believe this is the United States."

He said, "Would you mind looking at me?" And it was Mr. Martin Dies! He said, "I'm interested. Would you mind talking to me for a while and telling me why you feel this way?"

I said, "I wouldn't mind at all. I think what you are doing is so irrational and so thoughtless. I don't think you really understand what you are doing."

He said, "Well, let me tell you." So we went back and forth and he said, "Come on, let's go in and have dinner." So we went in and had dinner, continued this conversation. He said, "My stateroom is right down the hall here. We can leave the door open, so you won't be embarrassed, but I want to continue this conversation."

We talked until midnight. I wasn't convinced that he was decent and he wasn't convinced that I had a good case, but we at least--and I must say we parted in a very gracious, pleasant manner. But he said, "You know, I have never been attacked face to face like this before."

Morris: I can't believe that!

Pomeroy: Well, I think he had never put himself in a position where he could be, kept himself protected by staff and so on.

Morris: What was your concern about the Un-American Activities Committee?

Pomeroy: My concern was that they were dealing with innuendo, they were dealing with neighbor's reports, they were dealing with any kind of an allegation that anybody might choose to make that so-and-so could be a communist. I could have been charged with being a communist because when I was in law school, I went to a couple of Communist party meetings. At any time, if that had been revealed, I could have been charged with being a communist and my security clearance would have been removed. I felt the whole thing was so totally unfair. I think the reason I was able to articulate this as I did had to do with my legal training. I felt that the whole process was totally illegal. But it was an experience that deepened my concern for human rights and civil liberties.

Morris: It was the process that you were concerned with rather than the--?

Pomeroy: It was the process, but it also was the objective, Gaby, because there was a mentality developing which said that if you weren't violently pro-American, you were anti-American, and this was not in my opinion a healthy development. People were being destroyed. It was another kind of war--of minds and ideas.

Morris: In other words, you were supporting freedom of speech and of association?

Pomeroy: Of course, of course!

Morris: Did you feel that the Communist party was a potential threat to the United States?

Pomeroy: I didn't feel that it was. I felt that undoubtedly there was some subversion going on; there were efforts made to buy information and buy secrets. I felt that ought to be dealt with, but it ought to be dealt with totally legally and not on the basis of suspicion and fragmentary bits of information, which is what was happening.

Morris: How did Martin Dies defend himself or state his position?

Pomeroy: On the basis that there were threats to this country that none of us understood and that he believed--I think Martin Dies had been influenced by a group of very reactionary, conservative people who genuinely believed, as he genuinely believed, believed that communism was a threat to this country.

I guess that's where I went right down the middle and disagreed. I never believed that communism was a threat to the United States. I think certain subversive activities sponsored by Soviet government, yes, have been a threat, but I have never felt that communism per se as a political effort in this country was any threat. I think we could encourage it today and we can prove that it doesn't work!

Morris: That's an absolutely remarkable encounter.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, I have never forgotten it.

Washington in Wartime

Morris: What did it feel like being based in Washington, D.C during wartime?

Pomeroy: Fascinating. I loved it. It was like being at the very center of what was going on in the whole world. You had the feeling that the United States was the center of the world at that point and what we did or didn't do was going to make the difference. It was a curious Washington because there was a tremendous amount of fervor in various elements of the government, those that had any

direct relationship to the war effort, and there was a sort of an excitement and a special feeling that people had who were working in that part of the government.

Then you had all of the sort of old-line government agencies like the Internal Revenue Service and the General Accounting Office and all of those people. They seemed so pedestrian, they were just really dull as grass. If you met somebody, the first question you ask was, "What agency do you work for?" If they worked for--

Morris: Bureau of Weights and Measures?

Pomeroy: You thought, oh, you poor thing, you really don't know what is going on, do you?

Morris: They generally were trying to operate on a business-as-usual basis?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, yes, and they were losing staff, of course. [laughs] They had great trouble retaining staff because--

Morris: Anybody under fifty must have wanted to be out.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, and if they weren't getting into the military--they wanted to be working in some agency of government that had something to do with the war.

Morris: What was the housing situation like in Washington? Did your people deal with that at all?

Pomeroy: No, we didn't deal with it directly. It was the same impacted--people shared. I can remember when Harold and I were first married and before he went into the army, a friend of ours came to do a job--I've forgotten for whom, Red Cross maybe--and we had two bedrooms, so he came to live with us for six months. You shared; anybody who had an extra bed shared it. Housing was terribly tight. It was very difficult.

Morris: I can believe it. How soon was it that Harold was finished with his training and went off--?

Pomeroy: He was in training about six months and then went off to England, except I didn't know where he was going.

Morris: Right, there was great confidentiality about that in those days.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Morris: You shared an experience that thousands of women did of being married and having your spouse just not there.

Pomeroy: Yes, that's right, and of not knowing--I didn't know he was in England--and then I certainly didn't know when he went to North Africa.

Morris: It was probably just as well you didn't.

Pomeroy: Yes. There were just a lot of women who were in that same situation and so you probably think you were very special. Those of us who had jobs felt very fortunate because we were completely occupied. I particularly felt fortunate because I was doing a lot of traveling. I was seeing a lot of the country I had never seen before.

Morris: And very much a part of--

Pomeroy: And very much a part of the effort, yes.

Morris: So your marriage just sort of went into suspense.

Pomeroy: It didn't get off to a roaring start.

Career Thoughts; Legal and Social Work Approaches to Organization

Morris: Earlier when I asked you this question, you said you didn't begin to see your work as a career until you went to Washington. I wondered at what point in here maybe that--?

Pomeroy: I think the fact that I found that I could do a very professional job that was warmly received by the top administrators in the housing agency. The regional administrators of the housing agency would, if they had an assignment that they felt was going to be a somewhat difficult one, very often would ask for me. I began to have a real sense of this thing called community organization; it's something I do understand and I can do it.

Morris: Was it called community organization at that point?

Pomeroy: We called it, among ourselves, community organization. I am trying to think what we were called. We were simply called field representatives for the Home Use Agency.

Morris: It's a variation on groupwork, isn't it?

- Pomeroy: It's the kind of thing that I have always thought of as community organization. For example, in Sacramento when I became the director of the office there, what was involved, in addition to the administration involved in running the office, was the organization within the community that developed some support for the program.
- Morris: And that you can't do what you set out to do without a base of community support.
- Pomeroy: That's right, that's right. And it's the process of involving the community. It reaches a very high level when you look at a United Way operation. That's what it is, and it's the kind of thing that I brought to the Council on Alcoholism that they had not had, somebody with that kind of experience.
- Morris: In the forties, was this concept being written about and talked about in professional journals and meetings? Were you involved in that?
- Pomeroy: --Was not involved in that at that point because, in the first place, the people who were recognized as the professional people in community organization were generally trained social workers who had taken their casework experience and translated it into the community approach. I was a complete maverick because I was trained as a lawyer; I wasn't trained as a social worker.
- Morris: Some of the most skillful organizers I know are attorneys.
- Pomeroy: Yes, I think that it's an interesting thing that one's legal training develops the tactics that are vital to that kind of organization--the process of reasoning--and a community-organization job has got to be rationalized. You have to take it step by step and figure out what needs to be done first. I think that legal training gives one an opportunity to--
- Morris: Coming from an analytical point of view rather than from a humanitarian, say, point of view?
- Pomeroy: Exactly, and you analyze the problem, you analyze the resources, and then you construct a process that will permit you to use the resources to deal with the problem.
- Morris: Very pragmatic.
- Pomeroy: Very pragmatic. It's an area in which I think a lot of trained social workers have had a lot of difficulty, being willing to become pragmatic in terms of how you organize. It's the reason that someone like--who is our incredible man from Chicago who did the--

Morris: Saul Alinsky?

Pomeroy: Saul Alinsky, the most pragmatic human being that has ever walked into a community, in my opinion. But social workers have a little problem with being that pragmatic, I think.

Morris: Then in the forties, you weren't aware of the literature on this subject?

Pomeroy: No, I wasn't, and was really not involved because I moved into it up the stream, via the emergency organizations, and of course war housing was still part of that whole emergency scene. It really wasn't until we moved into the refugee operation that I began to see that the role of administration in relation to meeting people's needs was an arena in which I knew I could function.

Morris: Do you want to take a five-minute break before we get into overseas?

Pomeroy: Yes, let's take a break. [pause]

V EUROPEAN REFUGEE OPERATIONS, 1945-1946

Setting Up Displaced Persons Camps

- Morris: Okay, moving along to your European years, were you at all in touch with Harold? Did he get home on leave ever?
- Pomeroy: No, he did not. I knew the director of personnel for UNRRA and quite early made up my mind that if I could work in Europe, I wanted to do that for a variety of reasons. One, Harold was with military government, which meant he would be there for some time after the end of hostilities.
- Morris: You knew he was in Europe rather than in the Pacific theater?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes.
- Morris: Via the informal personnel channels?
- Pomeroy: I'm not sure I knew--Well, he was trained for Europe. As a matter of fact, he was trained for Austria. I didn't know that at the time he went overseas, but all of his orientation and the specialized training that he had after he went to England was focussed on Austria. But certainly I knew he was in Europe.
- I had assumed that the best way for me to get to Europe was with UNRRA. Joe Harris--did you ever know Professor Harris of the University of California?
- Morris: Yes, I certainly do.
- Pomeroy: Darling Joe Harris was the director of personnel for UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration]. He was on leave from the university and had been a great friend of Harold's, interested, of course, in government in California and the League

of California Cities and so on. So I had applied to UNRRA and they were interested in recruiting some women and I was recruited as a deputy team director. There were no women directing teams, but I would be the deputy director of a team that would go into a DP camp and run it. As the war came more quickly to an end in Europe than had been expected, UNRRA personnel were moved very quickly.

Morris: UNRRA is at this point also a very embryonic organization. Was there a transitional committee working before the UN was officially organized in was it June of '45?

Pomeroy: The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration preceded the UN in its organization, and after the formation of the UN, it was identified as a specialized agency of the UN. They had a headquarters office in Washington from where the recruitment was being handled.

Morris: From your sense, was it primarily an American impetus to get UNRRA organized?

Pomeroy: The push came from both the British and the Americans, because they recognized that they were going to be dealing with enormous numbers of refugees in Europe and their armies did not want to have to run DP camps.

Morris: Because armies are trained to fight battles and not to take care of people?

Pomeroy: Yes. It was not something that the military wanted to continue to do.

Women as Deputy Directors

Morris: UNRRA, you said, was looking for women--

Pomeroy: I think UNRRA, at the point at which I and several other women were recruited, was looking at the fact that they had the possibility of getting more experience and probably more competent people if they took some women because the men were still in the army. The team directors, in the minds of the people who were organizing the teams, were going to have to deal with the army people. They thought it would be better to have men as team directors and then they would have women as deputy directors.

Morris: To do the internal operations and let the chief do the external interrelating?

Pomeroy: Yes, that was the theory. It didn't work out that way at all.

Morris: Why didn't it work out?

Pomeroy: Because the women got siphoned off into other jobs. I became an executive assstistant to the U.S. zone director, and then became a deputy zone director and ended up running an office in Frankfurt for several months before I went up to Vienna.

Morris: Did you ever actually--?

Pomeroy: No, I never ran a DP camp. I had been recruited and had been told to in great haste prepare to depart and close an apartment and put stuff in storage. I'd had to go to school. UNRRA had a training program at the University of Maryland, and suddenly they started plucking people fast to get them overseas.

I was in London awaiting assignment. They were doing something called processing, and I ran into Joe Harris in the halls and he said, "What are you doing here?"

I said, "I am being processed and it really is something they ought to do with meat and cheese but not people!" [laughter] He said, "You are all through being processed. You are coming over to Paris with me. Go get your bags." He was opening up a recruiting office in Paris to recruit personnel from the American army who were ready for discharge--men who had enough "points" to get out and wanted to take their discharge in Europe and go to work. So I went to Paris in the middle of June.

Morris: This was June of '45?

Pomeroy: June of '45, and I was in Paris about a month, probably six weeks. We recruited people from the the army for supply officers for teams, transportation officers, communications people, and did a very fast recruitment and processing job. I served as the assistant director of Joe's recruiting office for the six weeks that I was there.

Then along came the newly appointed zone director for UNRRA for the U.S. Zone of Germany, Mr. Vernon Kennedy, and said Joe to him, "I think I know just the person here you ought to take up there with you to be your executive assistant." And I was shipped up to Germany quickly, to Wiesbaden.

Morris: Was it yet a spa and recreation center?

Pomeroy: The Red Cross had already taken over the casino and had set up a beautiful Red Cross club.

Life in Wiesbaden and London

Pomeroy: We lived in Wiesbaden. The Red Cross and UNRRA women lived in the Rose Hotel, which was a hotel with marvelous mineral baths. That's the way we kept warm the first winter because there was no heat. You went down and had a good soak and wrapped in a heavy overcoat and crawled into bed with the overcoat on top of you.

Morris: Just like a good hot tub.

Pomeroy: Yes, exactly.

Morris: By the time you got to London and then Paris, was the wartime feeling still evident?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. In London, of course, very little had been done to deal with the bomb damage there. It was a very damaged city. We were billeted in a mews that was within walking distance of the UNRRA office in London. We simply moved back and forth from the mews to the office and an occasional foray out to the hotels that had reopened. There weren't tourists, but they were reopened as a place to go for dinner or something like that. But at that point there was very little social life of any kind. You were there for a job and you were willing to work at it.

Morris: Were the Americans still heavily evident in London?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, they were all over the place and in uniform, of course. We were required to be in uniform. We had to wear American army uniforms.

Morris: With what kind of identifying patch?

Pomeroy: An UNRRA patch on one shoulder, on your left shoulder, and no U.S. insignia of any kind. You had to wear the uniform, but they had to take the U.S. Army buttons off because you weren't U.S. Army. So somewhere they found buttons. I had a nurse's uniform, which happened to be a good deal better looking than the WAC's uniform.

Morris: Any uniform would do?

Pomeroy: Any uniform would do; I had lucked out in Washington and managed to find a friendly supplier who had some nurses' uniforms. I had an authorization to buy a U.S. military uniform and managed to get two nurses' uniforms, two Eisenhower-type jackets, which were really very smart.

Morris: Much better than army issue.

Pomeroy: Yes, and I got four skirts. I got two green skirts and two pink skirts.

Morris: The military pink?

Pomeroy: Yes, the military pink, and I really was pretty smartly dressed. Eventually, the army protested and said they didn't want women wearing anything except the WAC uniform with the identification off, but by that time I was in Austria and was very chummy with the high command and they said, "Oh, keep what you've got. You don't have to change."

Morris: Did you have much contact with the British in London?

Pomeroy: Oh, very little in that brief period that I was first there. Later, yes, when we used to move back and forth between Vienna and London and Vienna and Geneva for meetings and that sort of thing, [we] got to see a good deal more of them, but very little in that original period.

Morris: Later on, were you working with your British opposite numbers in UNRRA?

Pomeroy: Yes, we were mixed teams. When I went to the U.S. zone of Germany, we gradually built up and added staff. We felt that we should be international, and we gradually requisitioned personnel and specified other nationalities.

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Paris: Recruiting Discharged Servicemen

Morris: --Paris that started the recruiting?

Pomeroy: Well, there we just worked! We worked from morning until ten or eleven. Our date to talk on the telephone with the London office was at ten o'clock every night, and so we were beating our brains

out to process personnel and report recruitments. We were generally on the phone for about an hour to give all of the information to London about what we had done that day.

Pomeroy: The great excitement was when Joe Harris came over. He had been flitting back and forth between London and Paris. He came over and was there for Bastille Day, the first Bastille Day after liberation, the fourteenth of July, 1945. When we finished up our telephone report, we joined the celebration and danced in the streets of Paris all night, and went to Mass at Notre Dame the next morning.

The French loved us at that point. You spent the whole night being proffered champagne and having French men and women throw their arms around you. "Vive la liberation!" It was a very emotional time.

Morris: I can well imagine. Were these young people that you were interviewing coming out of the service combat troops, that you were talking to, to recruit?

Pomeroy: Paris was a "repple depot" [redemption depot]. They were being funneled into Paris from all over France and Belgium for demobilization. The military interviewers had our list of requirements and if they talked to somebody that they thought would be a possibility for us, they would ask that person whether or not they were interested in overseas employment. If they were, they would send them up to talk to us. There were people from the tank corps, parachutists, some of everything. Our primary needs had to do with supply, transportation, and communication, so that those generally were the people that we got from the army.

Morris: People who had been doing that kind of service in the--?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: From the army's point of view, was that to a certain extent an economy measure, they didn't have to send people back home and then bring people out?

Pomeroy: I don't think they were as interested in that as they were in the fact that if the UNRRA teams had some ex-military personnel on them, they would probably facilitate working with the military, and there had to be a relationship with the military during the occupation, of course. The army was very cooperative about it.

Morris: Were there other familiar faces around besides Joe Harris?

Pomeroy: Oh, there was Louis Heilbron. Oh, no, I didn't see Louis until I got to Austria, for goodness sake. No, there weren't any other familiar faces in either London or Paris.

Morris: Had you made contact with Harold by this time?

Pomeroy: [pause] Yes, yes, from Paris on military telephone. He was in Vienna. He knew that I was coming to Europe because there was always correspondence via the APO, of course. He did not know precisely where I was because my mail had to go to a New York APO and then come back.

Morris: And his mail to you the same thing?

Pomeroy: Yes, I wrote him via a New York APO and he wrote to me via an UNRRA-New York APO such-and-such. But by the time I got to Paris, I knew where he was. I'm not sure how I found that out, but I found it out and I knew that he was in Vienna. I got through eventually on a military telephone.

Morris: That must have been an incredible experience.

Pomeroy: That was a very exciting--yes, it was. But I did not see him until after I got to Germany. After I got to Germany in September, the deputy chief of staff of the U.S. Army in Germany to handed me military orders to go to Vienna for my birthday!

General Mark Clark had an apartment in the big office building in Vienna that the army had taken over and he loaned that apartment to Harold for my birthday celebration.

So I was up there for about three days. It was at that point that I put in a formal request for a transfer to UNRRA-Austria, and in due time that came through.

Morris: So you were only involved with the actual zone administration for what, six months?

Escorting Eleanor Roosevelt

Pomeroy: Approximately. I went up there in July and was there until February and actually had been scheduled to leave in January, but Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt was coming to make her first visit to DP camps in the U.S. Zone of Germany in early February of 1946.

Pomeroy: General Millard White, who was the chief of staff, had heard that Mrs. Roosevelt was impressed whenever she met women doing jobs in connection with the occupation or anything else. So he thought, "Aha, we have a woman who is"--by this time, I was deputy zone director in Germany." He said, "We'll just keep her here and she'll be Mrs. Roosevelt's escort for her three-day trip here." So I had three days with that incredible lady.

Morris: I think we should include some of that. Unless you have kept a journal of those three days, maybe you could tell me about it.

Pomeroy: It really can be capsulized, Gaby, because her purpose was to see firsthand the conditions under which the refugees were living. The army provided all of the escort service and all of the transportation and all of the security for her. I was simply assigned to be her companion from the time she arrived until she departed, and, as the senior UNRRA person present, to represent the United Nations effort in caring for the refugees. So we had a schedule of visiting—a total in the three days--of about six camps; then on the afternoon of her third day to go back into the headquarters and have a briefing with the military command.

We stayed in the VIP guest house in Frankfurt, and we started out, at her insistence, at seven in the morning with breakfast, a quick breakfast, and then visiting camps. She spent enough time in each camp to talk with the camp leadership. We had progressed far enough so that the camps had their elected leaders and they had begun to set up their nurseries for the children. The army had taken care to see that there were set up infirmaries so that people who were ill were being provided a little bit of decent care.

We were in a Polish camp; we were in an Armenian camp, we were in a camp of Czech refugees, and we were in a couple of Jewish camps.

Morris: This is all in the immediate Frankfurt area?

Pomeroy: In the immediate vicinity, within probably a seventy-five mile radius of Frankfurt. In the three camps, other than the Jewish camps, there was lots of order. The little girls came and presented flowers to Mrs. Roosevelt, and Mrs. Roosevelt went into the infirmary and went into the nursery and talked--we had interpreters--and talked with the camp leadership, and went in the kitchen. We had meals, we had lunch every day, three days, in the displaced persons camps.

When we got to the Jewish camps, there was absolutely no way of controlling people. Their feeling about this woman was so intense. If they had been Catholic, she would have been the Virgin Mary! Their adoration for her was so moving. Everybody in the camp had to at least touch her. It was terribly important to them. We just moved around through them with a small group.

I insisted that we would not have MPs [military police]. I just couldn't bear the thought of bringing MPs into the camps, and I asked General White if we could have just a group of enlisted men with us, and they could be the MPs. I didn't care whether they were MPs or not, but I didn't want them wearing their MP arm bands. He said, "Sure, that's fine."

But it was an incredible experience to feel.

Morris: How had people who were in refugee camps and presumably had been in pretty incredible conditions for several years, how had they come to know about Eleanor Roosevelt?

Pomeroy: Because she was the wife the of the American president and the America president was responsible for their liberation, nobody else.

Morris: Not the American and British generals and military troops?

Pomeroy: No way! The person that meant the most to them was President Roosevelt.

Morris: That sounds like there was a lot of information getting in and through and around and amongst the whole displaced person community.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, the underground grapevine was incredible--lots of information passed around.

Morris: What was Eleanor's response herself? How was she to be with during those three days?

Pomeroy: She was a marvelous person. She [had] tremendous warmth that I felt was pretty well concealed as one saw her in public roles, when you got the feeling that this was a person of great dignity; and she was a person of great dignity. But she was also very intensely human and would stop in the middle of something when she'd see a woman with a particularly beautiful piece of native dress that somehow they had gotten hold of, particularly true among the Poles. She would sort of grab my arm and say, "Florette, look over there. Isn't that beautiful?" In the next

minute she would be asking about the conditions in the camp and really, really showing such evidence of caring that for me it was a wonderful three days.

The marvelous finale was in 1951 when I was leaving Europe to come home. I was in Geneva at our headquarters, which was in the Palais de Nations. I was having lunch with Meyer Cohen, who was the director general of IRO by this time. Mrs. Roosevelt was also having lunch, and Meyer looked over and saw her.

"Oh," he said, "there is Mrs. Roosevelt. If she gets up to leave before we do, we'll go over and speak to her." So we went over to speak to her. She had known Meyer and known him well from New York, greeted him warmly, and then she looked at me and she said, "Oh, it's Florette."

I said, "I can't believe this!" She said, "Wait a minute and I'll know your last name in a minute, too. It is Pomeroy." I just was so struck.

Morris: Did you and she have a chance to talk at all between yourselves during the three days about what this meant to her, to you, where the program was going?

Pomeroy: Certainly, she expressed great interest and encouraged me to talk about what I thought or hoped for the UNRRA. She did that with others, not just with me. I guess perhaps one by-product of her visit there was the fact that she did go back to Washington and helped enormously in getting some American quotas for refugees opened up for immigration; made a very strong case for it.

Morris: There had been prewar quotas; I guess those had gone into suspense during the war.

Pomeroy: Gone into suspense and some of them--for example, the Polish quota--was very modest. We had lots of Polish people with family members in this country but they still had to come in within a quota. That quota was raised very quickly as was the Czech quota, and there was a marked improvement within a year of the number of people who could get into this country.

Camp Leadership and Operations

Morris: Tell me, going back just a bit, what your own response was when you first made a visit to DP camps.

Pomeroy: It took me back almost instantly to our farmworkers' camps in California and the thought that those people in California were so well off, comparatively, and here were people whose lives were totally disrupted. As I had the chance to visit different camps more than once and to become acquainted with some of the leadership, I developed enormous respect for the courage and the quality of the people. It was interesting to watch. It was the teachers and the doctors and the professional people who, despite all they had been through, did rise to leadership roles in their camps. It was not uncommon to find the former principal of the school who would become the camp chairman, that kind of thing.

Morris: Was this a process that was spontaneous within the refugee groups or was this something that the people operating the camps were asking them to do?

Pomeroy: The refugees were organizing themselves, and they were encouraged to do that. That was facilitated by making some office space available for camp leaders and by providing some supplies for them to use for their communication within the camp and that sort of thing. It was encouraged, but it was initiated by them. In the little training experience that we had, we had all visualized that the camps should be developed as self-governing units to the extent that you could. They were encouraged to develop their own security and to develop their own tribunals to deal with problems within the camps.

What we said was, "If you can do this, it's going to work a lot better than if we have to impose it from outside." We had no resource except the military police. We--most of us, not all of us, but most of us--were very reluctant to ever involve soldiers with these people.

Morris: Why?

Pomeroy: Because the refugees had been through so much.

Morris: Any soldier was a frightening thing?

Pomeroy: Yes, of course. They had been subjected to the ultimate in authoritarianism. Every breath had been ordered. And living in the situation they were in, there wasn't a lot of freedom that they could be given, but it seemed important to some of us that they should be encouraged to manage as much of their own affairs as they could. There were some camps where it was not possible to operate without some outside security help, and, of course, as UN operators, we wanted no part of any security. We wanted the

occupying authorities to accept that responsibility. But we encouraged the refugees themselves to run their own shops, and they did it remarkably well.

Morris: Were these groups that you visited primarily from the immediate region of around Frankfurt?

Pomeroy: Not necessarily; they could have people who were released from the concentration camps, people who were released from the labor camps, and there was a great distinction between the concentration camps and the labor camps. There were lots of labor camps all over Germany and, as they were released, the effort was made to bring together the various nationalities so that they could be worked with on the basis of whether or not they wanted to go back to their country of origin or whether they wanted to be considered for resettlement.

Morris: How many people are we talking about?

Pomeroy: We were talking about, in Germany at that time, approximately half a million people who were in the camps. In Austria, we had about 150,000 people in the camps.

Morris: What about people who were not in either a labor camp or a concentration camp, but had just been completely uprooted from their normal life because of the movement of armies?

Pomeroy: In that category, there were the refugees who were fleeing from the probable Russian control of their countries. There were Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians and Yugoslavs. Those people melted themselves into the displaced people who had come together as a result of having been displaced by Germans in their own war effort. The reason they melted themselves into those groups was that they weren't sure that, as refugees from the threat of Soviet domination, they were going to be provided for in the Western countries. After all, Russia had been an ally and were the British and the Americans going to send all these people back? They didn't know for some time that they would be given asylum; so they just appeared and they didn't identify themselves as just having come from Poland or wherever.

Morris: They would just sort of--

Pomeroy: Join the group!

Morris: How did you deal with all of these languages?

Pomeroy: [laughs] Totally with interpreters, because most of us didn't even--I literally had never heard a word of German spoken until I got to Germany. I was rather fluent in French, but that didn't

help much! There were some English-speaking people in every group. They were the scholars and somehow they became a part of the leadership group, the people who could negotiate. We had no problems of communication as we seemed to always have some people around who could communicate.

Morris: People in the camp populations?

Pomeroy: Yes, in the camp population; and as we recruited our UNRRA team people and our administrative staff, we found some people with languages, particularly German. Most of the refugees, certainly the displaced people who had been moved around by the Germans, had by this time learned to speak German. That had been a survival technique. So as long as you had somebody around who spoke German and English, you could generally communicate with all of them.

Morris: You said that you were reluctant to use the MPs. How about the rest of the American military government people? How did they make the transfer from a combat situation to a rehabilitation kind of a situation?

Pomeroy: The attitudes of the people who had been trained for military government but attached to the combat element were different than the attitudes of many of the old line military personnel. Germany was a defeated and occupied country. Austria was an occupied country, and there was a great distinction made between the two. The Germans showed their resentment and could be difficult. Many of them were not pleasant people to be around. We would get pushed off the sidewalk by German civilians every once in a while until we learned how to walk with our shoulders in the proper position.

The military government people had their own problems in the civilian population. They had to worry about the German hospital, the German children, food, fuel. They were just very pleased to turn over the administration of the camps to UNRRA and to provide us with excellent support in terms of supplies and any kind of help that we needed in terms of military personnel that could help us in the solution of specific problems--communications; if we had camps where we had electrical problems, we could always ask the quartermaster to give us some help, that kind of thing. The spirit, the relationship, between the army and UNRRA was, in my experience, very good.

Morris: How about the people in the camps themselves, did you have enough contact with them to have a sense of what kinds of qualities there were in the survivors? Did they tend to be the people who had education and resources or did they seem to be the ordinary workers.

Pomeroy: They tended to be a real mix of peasants and the middle class and the intellectuals--particularly true of the Jewish community, but was so in all of them. Very quickly the camps organized themselves in such a way that a whole camp staff emerged from among the residents of the camp and were paid for what they did, the cooks and the carpenters and the supply people, the people who worked under the supply officer of the team that ran the camp, and all of the people that worked in the motor pool working under the transportation officer, gradually were all recruited from the camp residents themselves and paid for what they did.

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Morris: In the time that you were there in the zone headquarters, were refugees beginning to be able to pick up the threads of their lives?

Pomeroy: Not during the time I was in Germany. That was a holding operation completely because resettlement hadn't really started yet. It was a case of resettlement to a new country, return to their country of origin, or face a very uncertain future as a refugee in Germany.

Morris: Because Germany itself was in pretty bad shape.

Pomeroy: Because Germany itself was in pretty bad shape and there was very little inclination on the part of the refugees to take up residence in Germany and very little inclination on the part of the Germans to let them. Now, the Germans could have been compelled to at that point during the occupation, and some few refugees did move out and live as refugees in German communities but not in great numbers during that time. Now, later there was some assimilation, but that I didn't follow so I really can't talk very much about it.

VI INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION TRACING BUREAU, 1946-1952

Transfer to Vienna

- Morris: That brings us to your decision to move from the refugee operation into the tracing operation.
- Pomeroy: Well, that was welcoming an opportunity, for goodness sake, because that was the opportunity to go to Vienna!
- Morris: Right, and what you were looking for was a reason to--
- Pomeroy: A reason to go to Vienna where Harold was.
- Morris: Right, that seems eminently sensible!
- Pomeroy: Yes, I think it was a little opportunistic but understandable!
[laughs]

I went, I think, for a somewhat useful purpose. It was again the possibility of utilizing the organization and administration skills that provided that opportunity, because the UNRRA mission in Austria had decided that the Tracing Bureau in Germany could not include Austria. They had information at the Tracing Bureau in Germany that we needed and wanted, but they needed to set up a separate tracing service in Austria to deal with the forced laborers who had been brought to concentration camps in Austria, and there were several. There were also the Austrians who had become prisoners of the Germans and had been moved into forced labor camps, some of them located in other parts, some in Czechoslovakia, some in Germany, in the Sudetenland. There was need for collaboration with the bureau in Berlin but separate administration was required.

- Morris: Had you had some contacts with the German tracing bureau while you were in Frankfurt?
- Pomeroy: Not until after I got to Vienna, and the first thing they did was to send me off to Berlin [laughs] to spend a couple of weeks finding out what kind of records there were and how they were operating and so on.
- Morris: How did you hear that they were going to be setting this up in Vienna and make the negotiations to make the move?
- Pomeroy: I had already applied for transfer to UNRRA-Austria, for any job that they wanted to consider me for. So they looked at the kind of experience I had and, I suppose, talked to Harold. I don't know that, but I think they probably did. He may have been asked whether or not he thought I could do that job. Anyway, I was invited to come and show my shining face and was given an office in the Schwarzenburg Palace and told to go to work.
- Morris: Were there many couples who managed to put together this kind of working relationship during this postwar period?
- Pomeroy: Oh, no! [laughs] I don't know of anybody else who did. There probably were, but I just didn't know them.
- Morris: The professionally competent woman was not really all that visible in what was going on in Europe?
- Pomeroy: Most of the American women that I knew that worked in UNRRA were maiden ladies. I'm thinking of Aleta Brownlee and a distinguished woman social worker from Canada. They were not married, and I don't remember anybody who was trying to join a husband. We were always kidded about it--Harold would say, "I just happened to be in Vienna," and I would say, "I just happened to come to Vienna."
- Morris: Was there any sense in which you were supposed to be a counselor or chaperone or whatnot to these other women who were single?
- Pomeroy: Oh, no; oh, no! They were very independent and very quickly arranged their own lives.
- Morris: They must have been exceedingly appreciated and in demand as females in that kind of situation.
- Pomeroy: Yes, they were, although I really don't recall any great romances emerging. First of all, the professional women who were involved--and there weren't a great many of them--would have felt comfortable only in association with officers. They would not

have been very comfortable with enlisted men because they would not have been able to use the officers' club and that sort of thing. Most of the officers were married men who were excitedly talking about when the dependents would be allowed to come, and the dependents indeed were allowed to come late that spring about June of '46.

Organizing the Bureau

Morris: So when you got to Vienna, you were again coming in to a job that was just getting set up.

Pomeroy: Yes, I set it up.

Morris: What is the tracing process and mission and how did it relate to what else was going on?

Pomeroy: The mission was to respond to inquiries from all over the world about people who were last known to be or last thought to be in Austria. The primary responsibility was to either locate the individual or proof of death. The number of families whose lives were in suspense because they didn't know whether a husband or wife were still alive was tremendous.

The Germans, with their total passion for record keeping provided a very high percentage of positive information with respect to people who had died in the concentration camps. These records were in the document center in Berlin.

Pomeroy: They kept records by name, and not only were those records kept in the camp (where at the time of liberation they were frequently destroyed) but duplicate copies were kept in Berlin.

Morris: Were you dealing with primarily Jewish families?

Pomeroy: Oh, no; oh, no--all of the forced laborers, all of the refugees, political refugees, who had fled for one reason or another, and the labor camps that the Germans had set up and moved people around--Poles, Czechs, some Hungarians--and oh, the Armenians. I don't know where we found all of the Armenians, but we had two camps, one in Germany and one in Austria that had between five and ten thousand people in each of them. General Haig Shekeigian, an American general who was of Armenian ancestry, and George Mardikian came to Vienna in pursuit of the Armenians. We, for various reasons, were allowed to give special concern to their search. George had made great friends with the army of the United

States; he had done many favors for them. As a matter of fact, we consolidated some camps in order to get all of the Armenians together in one place where they could try and help them, and they did. They did great things.

Pomeroy: We registered every person in every DP camp in Austria and had their registration sent to us. That was the beginning of our resource file. And any inquiry that we got, whether it came from an individual who was seeking a relative or came from individuals in other countries--indeed, we got them from practically every country in the world before we were through--the very first place we checked was our own DP camp files to see whether or not we had the people.

The next stop was the document center in Berlin to have a check made there. Then, depending on what the circumstances were, we might initiate some unusual inquiries among DPs of a particular nationality--"Have you ever heard of?" If we had a camp, we'd get on the phone and tell the camp director, "If you've got anybody from the town of Ludovic, ask them if they ever remember hearing anything about So-and-So."

Morris: So setting up those camps must itself have been rather staggering.

Pomeroy: The camps were set up by the military when they moved in. Very often, they took over old labor camps.

Morris: How did people feel about being relocated and then placed in what had been a labor camp?

Pomeroy: All they were interested in was food, shelter, and clothing. Many of them might not have even known that they were in labor camps until after they got into them and some of the history began to come out.

Morris: When you were working in Vienna, did you spend much time in the camps themselves?

Pomeroy: No, I did not because my responsibility at that point was the organization of the Tracing Bureau, getting it staffed. We had some personnel from the British Red Cross who had had some experience in documentation, which is traditionally a Red Cross function, of course. Then we recruited linguists, either Austrians or refugees, depending on what languages we needed; we had a little battery of translators and interpreters. Setting up records and finally getting typewriters and books, we put together an operation that responded, before we were through, to something like a hundred thousand inquiries.

Morris: How many people were there on the staff?

Pomeroy: We built up a staff of about twenty. I had a secretary who was an UNRRA international employee and we had the British Red Cross people whom UNRRA paid. They were loaned by British Red Cross and we paid them. The rest of them were all so-called local staff.

Morris: Were there concerns about security?

Pomeroy: Yes, we could not employ any local Austrian or refugee person who was not cleared by the security of the British, French, or Americans. We didn't employ anybody from the Soviet sector of the city. But our staff had to be cleared by the occupying sections of the city, because we did not want any Nazis floating around in our records, and we didn't want any Soviets running around in our records. They were interested in finding any undocumented children that they could get their hands on.

Repatriating Lost Children

Pomeroy: If they had the slightest suspicion that we had a Russian child in one of our children's facilities, they would go to great lengths to try and get that child repatriated to Russia, and we had no reason to believe that they were really concerned about whether or not the child was of Russian parentage. They just wanted children, period, as did the French. The French were difficult.

Morris: Really?

Pomeroy: Truly. They just arbitrarily said, "We have lost so many children in this war that we are entitled to any children that we can find."

Morris: How were they planning to raise parentless children?

Pomeroy: Oh, they would put them in orphanages and bring them up well, according to them, to replace some of the children they lost.

Morris: Did the Germans have a similar--?

Pomeroy: The Germans did not express any--Well, they were doing what they were told. The French and the Russians were victors and "to the victors go the spoils." As far as they were concerned, they wanted the children and we [laughs] had a wonderful time. Have you ever known Aleta Brownlee--known about her, know who she is?

Morris: No, I guess I should.

Pomeroy: A child welfare person who was with the U.S. Children's Bureau at one time; a marvelous, marvelous person. She was our chief of children's services in the UNRRA mission in Austria. It was she that built up all of the defenses. She had a lot of commitment, and she certainly persuaded me that our responsibility was to try and determine the nationality of the child by whatever means we could.

You had to try and relate that child's existence to some adults [so] that you could then hopefully come up with a nationality for the child. But stateless children whose nationality could not be determined were not just to be handed over to anybody. They were to be provided for under international auspices, and Aleta persuaded me completely. So I became a very valiant defender in anything that she wanted to do.

Morris: Was there yet UNICEF?

Pomeroy: Yes, there was UNICEF or shortly later--I served as the liaison officer in Vienna for UNICEF, but UNICEF was only concerned with feeding children.

Morris: Children who were still in the camps?

Pomeroy: Yes, yes. No, the problem of nationality of homeless children, I think it was of major importance to only a few of us. Aleta was one, I was another. There was a marvelous woman, Deborah Pierce, a great friend of Aleta's now. She came from Virginia, was in the Geneva headquarters of the International Refugee Organization, and she shared that concern. But I think there was only a little handful of us.

Morris: I would think that the children, particularly the stateless ones, would have been the most important issue.

Pomeroy: Well, they were to us. The other issue that was also very important to us was that once a child's nationality had been documented and you were satisfied that this was indeed a Yugoslav child or a Hungarian child or a Russian child, then the moral obligation was to have that child repatriated to its own country. Aleta was just as strong in that area as she was in defending the stateless children against the grab.

Morris: You were able to establish this as a policy?

Pomeroy: We were able to make it stick. We sometimes had to do tough battle, because the British particularly were inclined to go along with the French.

Morris: How many little people were there?

Pomeroy: We had two children's homes, one in the American zone and one in the French zone. I guess we were dealing at any one time with as many as a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five children. Over a period of probably five years, I would guess we dealt with a thousand children.

Morris: Who had survived somehow without any relatives.

Pomeroy: Yes, completely homeless children.

Morris: What was the age range? When did they cease being a child and become a--

Pomeroy: We had to deal with them as adults once they were eighteen. When we started out, we had some infants who were brought to the camps without parents, and then moved into a children's home. [laughs] Of course, Aleta and I never had any illusions, but there were probably an equal number of children that were possessed by refugee families.

It's perfectly logical and probably what I would have done myself. If I had two children, why not have three?

Morris: Yes, or if I had lost a child--

Pomeroy: With all the motives, yes.

Morris: Yes, I would think in that situation children would be terribly important.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, they really had a special place in the minds and the hearts of the refugees, and those of us who had the opportunity to share, to take any responsibility at all, felt very protective about our kids.

Aleta was so marvelous, really. She was a trained social worker, a graduate of Chicago. She had pioneered in many developments in the U.S. She had worked as a field representative for Harry Hopkins in the federal emergency programs of the '30s and early '40s. She was forthright, very bright and witty and very determined. An outstanding human being who cared!

Morris: Where is she now?

Pomeroy: She lives over in Stinson Beach. She is a lady of eighty-plus, and she is a wonderful person, just wonderful. [Aleta died early in 1983.]

I try and go over at least once a year and sometimes twice just to see her because I have great admiration for her. I had known her in this country. She had worked in California, in positions superior to me.

We had an interesting experience. She had been in Yugoslavia with the UNRRA mission there before she came to Austria to head up our children's program. Here I was ten years, at least, her junior and much less experienced than Aleta. She had been in public welfare work all of her life, and she had to make the decision whether she wanted to work for me or not.

Staff Relationship Skills

Morris: How did you work that out?

Pomeroy: Very neatly, I think, by my saying that I couldn't think of anybody that I respected more and I hoped she'd be comfortable in this relationship and that I would go to any lengths to support her, and did.

Morris: Where did you learn these skills?

Pomeroy: I don't know--being Irish, I guess. [laughs]

Morris: Did anybody sit you down and say "this is how you deal with staff relationships when you get into office situations?"

Pomeroy: No, I grew into that with my first experience with Roy Pilling that I described in Los Angeles; he was a marvelous man. There, at a very relatively young age, I was thrown into situations where I had a lot of responsibility and had a lot of older people who had to look to me--whether they were actually under my supervision, they had to look to me for some guidance and direction. I think I developed methods of dealing with people without imposing on them. I still believe to this day that this is the way to deal with people.

Morris: Regardless of age--

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. There can always be room in my view at least, for age and experience. If I happen to be in the supervisory role or the directing role, I can still carry that out with an attitude of respect for the qualities that are there and, above all, to be very open.

Morris: Why is it that in so many nonprofit agencies the staff relationships seem to be a recurring problem area?

Pomeroy: They certainly are. Part of it I think has to do with--and this is an impression only--but I think it has to do with people becoming so engrossed with their responsibilities and the authority that goes with it that they are unable to react and respond to what is going on around them. They are so intent on "administering" that they lose touch with some of the human relationships that can make the difference whether a thing goes or not.

I remember the woman who was the director of an important agency in San Francisco who became such an absolute dictator that her own board finally came out from behind their beautiful facade and said, "Help, tell us what's wrong! Nobody on this staff dares say a word. They are all cowed and they are all browbeaten. What has happened?" I was director of the Community Fund at the time, and they came to me and said, "Help! What can you do to help us?" It was a pretty painful process, but she eventually had to resign because she could not change.

VII EAST-WEST RELATIONS

[Interview 4: 5 May 1982]##

International Tracing Conference; Red Cross Consultant

Morris: What I would like to pick up on today is the International Tracing Conference in 1946 that you list upon your vita.

Pomeroy: It was held in Warsaw.

Morris: Was this particularly for problems in Poland?

Pomeroy: No, it was an attempt to bring together the people who were involved in the tracing efforts in both Western Europe and Eastern Europe. There was no one there from the Soviet Union. There were representatives there from Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Austria, Germany, the Western Zones of Germany--represented through UNRRA--somebody from the British Red Cross in London, somebody from the Swiss Red Cross and the International Red Cross. It was the first and to my knowledge the only such effort that was put together.

I don't remember what the basic sponsorship was, but it was felt that under international auspices it might be possible to bring together the people from the various countries where the refugees either were or were from, and set up some sort of a modus operandi that would permit continuing communication between the East and the West. It didn't work.

Morris: Because political tensions were already present?

Pomeroy: Yes. We were in Warsaw about a month and we became devoted to the woman who was the head of the Polish Red Cross which, was the host agency of the conference. Her first name was Louise and I have

never been able to remember her last name. Those of us from Germany and Austria particularly became very fond of her, and we tried to keep in touch.

Within a month after we went back to Vienna and wrote thank-you notes and so on, letters addressed to her were returned saying "unknown," which told us that the Soviets had not appreciated her efforts at all. Of course, there was very strong Soviet domination in Poland.

Morris: Had she been a key person in initiating this conference and having it held in Poland?

Pomeroy: Certainly, she had to be. What we thought we had to conclude was that the Soviets had let it happen, perhaps without realizing the extent of communication with western people that was going to be involved, but then having let it happen, didn't like it. We found that we had not opened up any channels of communication with the Eastern countries.

Morris: So it didn't have any follow-up?

Pomeroy: No, no. It did not accomplish what those of us who went as participants had hoped for. My guess is that UNRRA probably was the initial instigator, but that they got the International Red Cross in Switzerland to serve as the front agency for it because that was more acceptable to the Russians at that time than UNRRA was.

Morris: Because it was the Red Cross or just because it was a nongovernmental organization?

Pomeroy: I think because it was the Red Cross. Strangely enough, the Soviets had retained and continue to retain the Order of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, which is their Red Cross. They maintained liaison with the International Red Cross in Switzerland and, the last that I heard, were continuing to.

Morris: You also served as consultant to the Hungarian Red Cross in this period. Was there something special about Hungary?

Pomeroy: That was a separate assignment from the International Tracing Conference. That was a request that the Hungarian government made of UNRRA to loan them someone who could work with the re-establishment of the Hungarian Red Cross to serve as the tracing organization in Hungary. It was in that capacity that I was loaned for a month.

I went to Budapest for a month and worked with the English-speaking people involved in the Hungarian Red Cross, who had been all cleared by the new government.

Morris: Was that a Russian--?

Pomeroy: No, no, that was prior to the takeover in Hungary. This was when the Nagy government was in control and we, the Americans--I probably shouldn't even put this on the tape, but you will deal with it appropriately--with our customary ineptitude, in my opinion were backing the most reactionary people. We did it in Hungary, we did it in Greece, we did it in Czechoslovakia, God love us, and the outcome was as expected. The Soviet-backed forces came into power, which was not what the U.S. government had hoped for, and not what has been in the interest of freedom and liberty for those people.

Morris: Were these governments being backed at the suggestion of the American military people?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, I'm sure. The State Department people that I got to know in Hungary, in Austria, less well in other places, but in those two countries I really got to know some of our State Department people quite well. They were a little bewildered by their relationship with the military. They became the political advisors for the military, but in effect the military wishes, the military needs, appeared to me to guide the "advice" given.

Morris: From the military government people?

Pomeroy: Of course, in Hungary you had no military government people; you had military liaison, Hungary not being an occupied country but being a liberated country at that point in time, as was Austria. The difference was that the Russians were not in Hungary in the same fashion that they were in Austria and Germany. They were not occupying forces. They subsequently became occupying forces to the exclusion of everybody else.

Morris: It's interesting that you spent some time both in Poland and in Hungary for the Tracing Bureau, because in the history of the IRO that I was reading, there is the comment that both in Poland and in Hungary there was, after the war and in the immediate refugee situation, a great movement out of both of those countries because of political changes.*

*The International Refugee Organization, Louise W. Holborn, Oxford University Press, New York, 1956.

Pomeroy: There were indeed. We had thousands of Hungarian refugees who moved through Austria, many of them Jewish. It would appear that the Jewish refugees, both in Poland and in Hungary, were far more sensitive to the prospect of Soviet domination, and therefore repression as far as they were concerned, than were many of the non-Jewish people in both of those countries. In other words, I think the Jews were a little less naive than were the rest of the populations.

Jewish Refugees

Morris: To what extent was the matter of Jewish refugees of importance particularly to the International Refugee Organization?

Pomeroy: The International Refugee Organization and its predecessor agency, UNRRA, walked a very tight rope in the two countries, Germany and Austria, where they had to deal with the tripartite--the French, American, and British--military authorities. The British had an absolute ban on the movement of Jewish refugees through their zones, and so they were concentrated primarily in the American zone.

The sense was that somehow the international organization had to be completely even-handed in its dealing with refugees, and to facilitate the illegal movements of Jewish refugees was something that had to be done not totally openly. The Americans were less critical and more open to the fact that there were unique problems as far as Jewish refugees were concerned.

The British were repressive in their attitudes about Jewish refugees and the French were kind of laissez-faire. They wouldn't have been particularly helpful, but they didn't want to interfere. We didn't have to deal so much with them because the line of communication for Jewish refugees from Austria was through Austria into Italy and to the ports and did not have to go into the French zone of Austria.

Morris: I see, so physically they were detached?

Pomeroy: Yes. The British became involved because, coming out of Yugoslavia particularly, any of them that worked their way through Yugoslavia had to come in to the British zone of Austria. That was the border. So the international agency provided housing, medical care, food, of course, and did not document Jewish refugees who were headed for Israel. They would accept Jewish refugees who

wanted to apply for entry to other countries and they would document them, but those who were going to Israel were not documented by the international organization.

Morris: When you say documented, do you mean listed as being Jewish?

Pomeroy: Or provided with identity documents.

Morris: You just let them continue without documents?

Pomeroy: Yes, they just continued to move. The transportation was provided by the Jewish agencies, both the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the American Jewish agencies. They were providing the transportation. They were dealing with the movement of people. IRO was dealing with the movement of all refugees to every place else except Israel.

Morris: So primarily what came through IRO was not Jewish refugees?

Pomeroy: Oh, no, because there were lots of Jewish refugees who did not want to go to Israel, and those people were documented and dealt with precisely as any other refugees seeking a haven in Canada, Australia--not very many went to Australia--the United States, South American countries; they were dealt with as were all of the other refugees.

Morris: And you had sort of an understanding with the Jewish agencies that you just didn't deal with that situation--

Pomeroy: That's right, and that they stayed in IRO camps. They were provided food, clothing, shelter, and medical care as long as they were in Austria. But their movement out of Austria was facilitated by the nongovernmental agencies.

Morris: That must have been an interesting kind of a relationship.

Pomeroy: It was a fascinating relationship.

Dealing with the Austrian Government

Pomeroy: At one point, the Austrian government wanted to cut down on the amount of food that the Austrian economy was going to deliver to refugee camps and singled out two or three of our Jewish camps. It was an experience that occurred when our chief of mission was out of the country, and I had to deal with it because at that

time I was the deputy chief of the IRO mission. I had to go to the American army and do some real threatening--a newspaper expose of anti-Semitic activity that was countenanced by our army--before the army would jump on the Austrian government and say "quit this nonsense."

Morris: And did that work?

Pomeroy: It worked; yes, it worked. I must say [laughs] my chief of mission, who was a retired major general, came back and said, "Miss Florette, what have you been up to?" [laughter] I said, "I was just getting our people fed, sir!"

Morris: Did you have the sense that the timing was on purpose when the chief of mission was out at the time?

Pomeroy: No, I did not, because both the Austrian government and the American army were really quite as accustomed to finding me there as him. They knew that I had full authority to act for him, and so it didn't make any difference whether he was there or not. I think they were trying something on for size and it didn't work.

Morris: One of the comments in the history of the IRO is that the Austrian economy was in worse shape than other parts of Europe and, therefore, it made for greater strains on relations with IRO.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, it took continuous monitoring of all of the supply lines that were providing food from the Austria economy into our camps to make sure that rations weren't being cut down without our knowledge. The American army also got into it because there were points at which some surplus American army foods were diverted to our refugee use and where the Austrian government would have liked to have diverted them to theirs and probably give us less useful supplies instead, and we were able to do battle.

Pomeroy: Did the Austrian government provide food and supplies as a matter of humanitarianism or were they being made--?

Pomeroy: No, they were required. They were required by the occupying authorities.

Morris: It was a form of reparations?

Pomeroy: Yes, yes.

Morris: Would it be you and your chief who did the negotiating with the Austrian government?

Pomeroy: Yes, we did indeed. We negotiated directly with the Austrian government because that covered the operation of camps in the three zones rather than our negotiating separately with the three occupying powers. But we always maintained very close and good relationships with the occupying powers because if we got into any trouble, they were the ones who were going to have to enforce it. We had no means of enforcement. All we could do was negotiate.

Morris: Who were the people in the Austrian government?

Pomeroy: The minister of social welfare--and it was not that exact term--the minister of finance, and the prime minister himself, who happened to be my next-door neighbor, so we did some of our negotiating across the fence.

Morris: How were they to do deal with in this--?

Pomeroy: They were, I would say, more than satisfactory to deal with. There was a real anxiety on the part of most of the Austrian officials that we had to deal with to demonstrate their good intent with respect to the humanitarian problems that were being dealt with. I have a lovely book that was given to me by the Austrian prime minister when I left--Leopold Figl. In autographing it, he said, "One of the greatest helpers for Austria." That was his attitude.

Morris: So he felt that the IRO services were helping Austria get re-established.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes; oh, yes, and he set a tone for his ministers. They were generally pretty supportive.

Morris: Politically, how were these gentlemen?

Pomeroy: They were the conservative Catholic party.

Morris: They had been involved in Austrian government before the war?

Pomeroy: No, I don't know that, I suddenly realize. I would guess they had been involved, probably, at the provincial level, because what had to rise up somehow were people to head the national government who did not carry with them the color of the Anschluss and subservience to Hitler.

Morris: And they had to be acceptable to the tripartite powers?

Pomeroy: Well, they had to be acceptable to the quadrapartite, because we had a Russian element. There was a Russian zone of Austria that we as IRO had nothing to do with. We didn't operate in the Russian zone. We operated in the three Western zones.

Russian Reactions

Morris: Was there a corresponding refugee organization run by the Russians?

Pomeroy: No. Our sense was that the refugees who might have found themselves in the Russian zone made every effort to get into another zone as quickly as possible. You never heard of refugees in the Russian zones of Austria!

Morris: They just didn't exist?

Pomeroy: They were not recognized as such. My guess is that they attempted to claim Austrian citizenship or just melted in because you certainly never heard of any refugee programs administered by the Soviets.

Morris: That is an interesting contrast that the Russians either didn't see a need for it or didn't have the skills to deal with it.

Pomeroy: Yes, or operated on the theory that if there were any Polish refugees there, they wanted them back in Poland; if there were any Russians, they wanted them back in Russia. The people who did not want to go back made their way elsewhere as quickly as possible.

Morris: Regardless of national barriers or political barriers?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, yes.

Morris: I gather that there were barriers established fairly soon to the movement of people.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, and in order to move through the Russian zone of Austria, which we had to do--Vienna was in the center of the Russian zone--we had to have what were called gray passes that were countersigned by the Soviet command in order to go from Vienna to Salzburg in the U.S. zone or to the British zone, and we had to make our plans three days in advance. As I recall, we didn't use our passports to get those cards, but we had to submit cards countersigned by our own military authority for whatever zone we were living in within the city.

The Soviets had complete control, and I can tell you that when Berlin was blockaded and the airlift started, we spent a lot of time in Vienna recognizing that the city of Vienna could not be fed with an airlift the way they were doing Berlin because the airport wasn't big enough to bring in the huge carriers.

Morris: The supply planes, yes.

Pomeroy: Very surreptitiously, the American airport was expanded --and there were periods when there was no air traffic in and out of the Tulln airfield, which was a quadrupartite airfield. It was the airfield for Vienna, but every once in a while, the Soviets would decide to close the roads to the airport. So during the Berlin airlift, we had lots of second thoughts about our possible problems.

Morris: Did you have any contact with Soviet officials in the course of your duties?

Pomeroy: We did indeed. There was a Soviet repatriation commission in Vienna with whom we had to deal whenever we had any Soviet citizens who wanted to go back to Russia, and we got to know some of these people fairly well. The thing that struck us, and really saddened us so much, was that generally, if we got to know them, we were never in their houses, they were never in ours, they would never accept an invitation to anything except a **very** official party. But if we got to know any of them really well, they went back to Russia rather quickly. We saw new faces frequently.

They were insulated by their own command from any close communication, friendship, association with the British, the French, or the Americans. We were all lumped together.

Morris: In those brief contacts that you had with the changing Russian population, did you get any sense of their concerns for people in need of repatriation or resettlement?

Pomeroy: There one got a sense that they were not approving of our willingness to let individuals decide. As far as they were concerned, if they were Soviet citizens, there shouldn't be any question but what they would be handed over and repatriated and, of course, western powers wouldn't hear of it. So you didn't get any great sense of their being concerned about the people as much as they were concerned about the Soviet and the return to Soviet Russia of anybody who could be identified as a Soviet citizen.

Morris: Because of their own internal manpower needs?

Pomeroy: Presumably, or because they didn't want Soviets out of their country. I think part of it would be that they didn't want anybody who was a Soviet citizen living a life different from that that was being lived within Soviet Russia.

VIII REFUGEES: HUMANITARIAN, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

IRO's Guiding Philosophy

Morris: Was there some kind of guiding policy or philosophy to the IRO as it operated in Austria?

Pomeroy: When you say guiding policy, you are speaking with respect to its philosophy of dealing with refugees?

Morris: Yes, or any sort of goals in terms of international relations.

Pomeroy: The international philosophy involved was the right of individuals to make their own determination as to where they wanted to live. That was a very significant philosophical concern, and it was extremely important to apply it to the people from the Eastern European countries. By this time either their countries had already experienced Soviet domination or the handwriting was on the wall and they saw it coming. So for those people, the right of choice was extremely important.

I think I referred earlier to the fact that children were terribly important to the French because they wanted to replace the youth population they had lost during the war. Again, the right of determination by some impartial international body on behalf of those children, in an effort to determine what was probably best for the children, was an important consideration. It was a philosophical policy that both UNRRA and IRO established and defended this right to the end of their dealings with the occupying governments.

I think the other policy consideration was that the international organization, required and enjoyed the assistance and protection of the occupying military authorities. However, that relationship did not obligate UNRRA, and later, IRO to accept the judgments of the occupying authorities in those areas that were

the responsibility of the international agencies. The protection of the right of choice, the procedures for resettlement or repatriation, and the case prior to departure were UNRRA--IRO matters.

In other words, some of the military individuals, I would say in all three governments, might have been much more rigid in requiring refugees to accept certain resettlement opportunities. The international organization would not impose the acceptance of a particular resettlement opportunity. Where there were refugees who, for whatever reasons, had not wanted to accept any resettlement opportunities, the effort was made to integrate them into the Austrian population and seek Austrian government assistance in acquiring for them at least legal residence; if they couldn't acquire nationality citizenship status, to at least give documented-refugee legal-residence status.

That would not necessarily have been the policy of the several occupying armies. I am not saying it wouldn't, but it would not necessarily have been that way. But the international agency felt perfectly free to make its own rules and regulations.

Morris: That was accepted by the various occupying authorities?

Pomeroy: Well, yes, because you have to remember at that time you had people like Mrs. Roosevelt with a very strong voice at the United Nations. Had there been an insistence on the part of, for example, the American army to impose on the international agency any restrictions or requirements that the international agency wasn't willing to accept, there was a place to go.

International Staff Methods and Administration

Morris: In terms of being deputy chief of the mission there in Austria, was it complicated to work with a staff that was coming from many different backgrounds and different national origins?

Pomeroy: I would say not. It didn't have any unusual difficulties and was perfectly fascinating. You found great differences in methods of doing things, methods of administration. The British had a tendency to be more autocratic. The Scandinavian countries, (and we had some wonderful Swedish, Norwegian, Danish staff people) [were] much more attuned to our methods of operation.

It happened in Austria that the administration of the camps, was primarily in the hands of U.S. personnel assisted by other nations. In the case of the resettlement programs, the senior staff members were British and French and their methods were quite compatible.

The chief of the division of resettlement was a British Quaker and a wonderful person, British Red Cross and British civil service experience. His methods of administration were quite different than you would have found amongst a group of Americans with similar experience. Then he had a French deputy who was tuned in very well to his way of doing things.

Morris: You tended to put people of the same nationality or closely allied geographically, they tended to end up working together?

Pomeroy: Not really by design, but it seemed that the skills that were needed emerged on that basis. The other thing we did in the running of camps, where we had camps operating in each of the three zones as we did, we made sure that we had two or three key people who related to the occupying military authorities. In the American zone, we had supply officers who were right out of the American army and the British zone the same thing and the French zone the same thing.

We tried to tailor our teams in such a fashion that we could maintain good liaison with the military people.

Morris: Were some of these administrative ideas coming down from the secretary-general as policy matters or anything like that?

Pomeroy: No, no, we made it up as we went along. [laughter] We were creative!

Morris: The reason I ask is because Dr. Holborn's history comments that running the IRO was a matter that involved all possible personnel management problems that could ever have been thought to exist.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Morris: She credits the secretaries-general with having been excellent administrators in personnel management. I wondered if you had any contact with those people.

Pomeroy: Yes, a good deal. Part of their genius was that they picked people and put them in the missions with certain areas of responsibility and then pretty much left them alone. It was not a hands on operation from headquarters. There were a limited number of regulations that emerged from Geneva headquarters, originally

London headquarters when it was UNRRA and then Geneva when it became IRO. The regulations that came out of the headquarters dealt primarily--not exclusively, but primarily--with accountability.

When it came to program administration, there were some program guides. There were some headquarters people who were considered the best authorities on medical care, on diet and nutrition, on employment, development of employment training, and those people were available for consultation, but they did not undertake to manage on a hit and run basis. They were extraordinarily sensitive to the fact that you needed to keep a very flexible operation and function in a way that allowed you to make the best use of the people that were there, both staff and the refugees themselves.

I think we had an extraordinarily successful experiment, in the operation of camps, with a lot of participation by the residents, with camp councils and their officers, with a lot of negotiation going on between the camp director and the camp council--that kind of thing. There was a lot of latitude for that.

Morris: Was this a new idea in dealing with a client group, as it were?

Pomeroy: I am trying to think whether or not there was anything in my own experience that would have stimulated the encouragement of that. I guess the experience of the thirties in the Depression here where we saw people in need organizing in order to represent themselves to authority was a small taste of that kind of thing.

There was also the idea that with a team of eleven people responsible for the administration of a camp of anywhere from twenty-five hundred to five thousand people, you better have some system that allowed the people themselves to carry a major part of the responsibility, because otherwise you were going to have anarchy. There was no way that eleven people were going to control, if you please, and so it had better be a very coordinated effort on the part of the people themselves plus the team leadership.

Morris: The people working on the IRO teams were comfortable with this kind of--?

Pomeroy: Very; that was one of the things that amazed me: that there was almost, no matter what their nationality was, there seemed to be a uniform commitment to the idea that it was terribly important for these people to begin to have a voice in their own affairs.

Morris: Is that because of the kind of people who would gravitate into the IRO as staff, or was this a uniform response to an emergency situation?

Pomeroy: I think it was some of both. I think you did get people gravitating to staff work with IRO on the basis of humanitarian concerns; generally speaking, you don't find people with dictator complexes gravitating toward a humanitarian enterprise. We had problems from time to time with some of our very top military personnel who had decided they wanted to work for IRO and had been employed. This was true of the British and it was true of Americans; I don't recall it as being so significant with the French. But we had to sit on some of those people and teach them to be democrats--teach them about democracy, not to be Democrats, but to teach them about democracy.

In Austria which, Peter Gibson, who was the director of resettlement, and I were given almost complete authority by the retired U.S. general who was our chief of mission to conduct the whole operation. If he and I together decided to sit on somebody, they knew they had been sat on, because Peter was a tough little English Quaker with deep, deep commitment to humane values, just from the inside out. We had carte blanche practically to teach these people how they were to behave toward our refugees! [laughter]

Resettlement Operations

Morris: How much a part of your work was the resettlement operation?

Pomeroy: In functioning as deputy chief of the mission, I had an overall supervisory responsibility with utmost respect for the man who was running it, Peter Gibson. My involvement had mostly to do with liaison with the American army and the American legation with respect to American procedures for resettlement.

When Peter thought I might be a little more successful, he would say, "This is no time for a British bloke! You better pick this one up and carry it," if it involved that kind of negotiation.

On the other hand, when it was a question of dealing with the British authorities, even if it were a part of my basic responsibility involving a running of the camps, if the British authorities had to be dealt with, I would much prefer to have Peter involved.

Morris: What I am trying to get a picture of is, in the overall operation of the mission, whether most of the activity and energy and money went into running the camps or the resettlement or the training.

Pomeroy: We viewed the resettlement activity as of primary importance. It was in our minds important for us to keep our refugees well and healthy and to try and begin to get them into some training programs looking toward resettlement. But the ultimate objective was resettlement, and so a great deal of time, effort, and money went into the resettlement program. We courted the representatives of the countries that were accepting refugees. We would make every effort to get the selection teams into Austria and to make life very comfortable for them.

Morris: Who were the selection teams?

Pomeroy: These were people coming from the various countries, particularly Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the South American countries. They did the interviewing and offering of opportunities because nobody could be resettled unless the country to which they were going could offer them employment. So the determination as to whether they could be offered employment was made by the selection people. You had teams from the three English speaking countries and the United States as well--four, and then from the South American countries, principally from Argentina and Brazil, some from Peru, and probably a very small smattering from the other South American countries.

They would interview people from three standpoints. They always had a doctor on their team for health examinations (we never referred anyone unless we could provide them with a medical certificate as to their health) employment potential, and the third I would like to think was not heavily political but I know better. I mean I'm sure that most of the countries were very careful to try and screen out anyone with communistic leanings.

Perhaps they were not quite as concerned with screening the ex-Nazis that may have managed to take on new identities, I don't think there were a lot of them. I think most of them found their way out of Germany well before the end of their war on their own. I don't think they came through the international process. I think that the net was too tight.

Morris: At the Austrian mission level, were you involved at all in the negotiations about immigration numbers from different countries?

Pomeroy: No. The negotiating with the various countries went on entirely from the headquarters; they would work out quotas for each of the countries with Germany and Austria and for the various zones.

It was an incredible process. I think it's fair to say that a majority wanted to come to the United States and, looked at overall, I believe that more of them had relatives in the United States than in any other country because that is where the great migration of earlier years had gone.

Morris: How much contact did you yourself have with individual refugees as deputy chief of mission?

Pomeroy: There were always some individual refugees with whom we were involved one way or another. Very often we would have an individual refugee or a refugee family called to our attention because of the interest of somebody in the United States, and those people we would have an opportunity to meet and to visit with and to see what we could do to be helpful. Prior to being deputy director of the mission, I was director of the department that was called Health, Care, and Maintenance, which ran the camps. I spent a good deal of time moving around visiting camps during that six-month period because I wanted to get very firsthand impressions about how well the UNRRA-IRO staff were doing and how effective the camp organizations were. To me, this was an unique experience both in administration and in human performance.

Morris: How did the refugees in general take to the idea of choosing their own leaders and deciding what needed to be done and who could best do it?

Pomeroy: With great enthusiasm and thought; they took it very seriously. Every once in a while we would find that someone had moved into a leadership role in a camp and wasn't being very effective. Almost invariably the reason was because there were a few people from his home village who had known that person as not a very good person and they managed to disaffect a whole group of people. We were pretty careful. I think the only times that we ever moved in and arbitrarily said, "No, we won't accept so-and-so in this leadership role," was if we had a clear record of some serious misbehavior.

But that didn't happen very often. It's interesting that given even the most difficult circumstances, where people are allowed to make judgments they make good judgments. Even in very primitive kinds of things, I think they made better judgments than we could have made for them.

Morris: Did you have any way of keeping track of whether the people who emerged as leaders had been leaders or more highly educated or more economically successful?

Pomeroy: We found that quite generally, the teachers, the lawyers, the professional medical people--the dentists, the doctors--some of the clergymen, rose to the top.

Morris: How about women?

Pomeroy: A paucity thereof! They were busy bearing children.

Morris: In the camps?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes; oh, yes. Our population increased naturally.

Morris: In the IRO history, there was a passage that said there was indeed a great surge in the birth rate all over Europe right after World War II, and that the population that had been lost during the war was replaced within a very short time by the increase in births.

Pomeroy: I had never really thought of it until this moment, but I don't think that we had introduced any element of family planning into anything that we had to do with the camps. Of course, one reason might have been the fact that the two religious groups represented were Jewish and Catholic. At that point in time, I doubt that Jewish refugees would have engaged in any birth control activities because I think they were truly interested in seeing their own population preserved, and with an understandable basis for it.

Morris: When you say the two predominant religious groups were Catholic and Jewish, does that mean that other people didn't survive or that the rest of the population were not terribly religious?

Pomeroy: There were other religious interests represented. There were Lutherans, there were the Greek Orthodox, and there were a smattering of the various Protestant religions; the Council of Churches maintained a very active relief program with the refugees. But the two major groups were Jewish and Catholic.

Role of Volunteer Organizations

Morris: How much involved with the program were volunteer agencies, either international or European?

Pomeroy: The international volunteer agencies were indeed very actively involved. We accredited about a dozen international voluntary agencies that included the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the American Joint Distribution Committee (Jewish), Church World Service, the Quakers, the Armenian group that was headed by the

late George Mardikian. It had a most unusual name: The American Society to Aid Homeless Armenians. George Mardikian was its international president, and he spent a lot of time in Europe taking care of his refugees. There was a Lutheran church group. There were some others. There were no indigenous voluntary agencies accredited to the international organization.

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Pomeroy: They existed, but they were at that point heavily involved with the Austrian population. Those groups consisted principally of Caritas, which is the international Catholic agency in European countries, and a similar organization of Lutheran origin--I've forgotten its name. There were no indigenous Jewish organizations; they were gone.

Morris: When you say you accredited them as part of your program--

Pomeroy: We had a department in IRO called the Voluntary Agency Division. The woman who headed it was Florence Boester, who was an American social worker and a neat person. We certified to the respective military authorities the personnel that was assigned by the voluntary agencies, and they then became eligible for the same things we were--the PX and use of American facilities or British, depending on their nationalities.

They brought their own programs to us. AJDC, for example, with the Jewish Agency for Palestine, was the agency involved with resettlement to Israel. Those two worked hand in hand, and they were responsible for the movement of Jews to Israel. The National Catholic Welfare Conference provided a variety of supplementary help to Catholics in the camps and were one of the sponsors of an American immigration program for refugees. The British Red Cross provided some amenities in refugee camps in the British zone of Austria.

Their leadership, their senior staff people, we would use as a sort of an advisory council from time to time. We'd bring them together and say, "Look, this is the kind of a problem we are looking at. What ideas do you have? Are there any cooperative things we might be doing?"

Church World Service did an enormous sponsorship job for resettlement. They were working on both sides of our mission. They worked with our resettlement people, and they also worked with the people who were running the camps.

Morris: Were there any particular problems in integrating those volunteer agency people with your staff people?

- Pomeroy: No, there were not because, again, the clear objective for everyone on our side, meaning the voluntary agencies and IRO, was to effect the maximum resettlement. To some extent, we would work with the voluntary agency people to try and push some of the resettlement missions because they weren't moving fast enough, they weren't taking enough people.
- Morris: Did the voluntary agencies have any particular viewpoints in terms of eliminating prejudice or sponsoring greater religious belief or anything of that sort?
- Pomeroy: No, they were absolutely marvelous. They were really there on a nonsectarian basis. They were sectarian-sponsored, but they certainly functioned in virtually a nonsectarian capacity. Now, I will say, I think that Church World Service sponsored Protestants, the National Catholic Welfare sponsored Catholics, but I'm sure that there were some sponsorships from both of those organizations without regard to the religion of the refugees.

Jewish Humanitarianism; Catholic Contacts

- Morris: Were there any particular kinds of cases or individual cases that have stuck in your memory over the years, either for the complexity or the ingenuity with which things worked out?
- Pomeroy: I thought about that after I read your note. The only thing that really comes back to mind vividly is the reception that I had when I visited Israel the first time and went to see some of their programs. In some of the kibbutzim, I would find somebody flying across the camp ground to say, "Mrs. Pomeroy, Mrs. Pomeroy, you have come to visit us!" They would be people I had known in the camps in Austria, which was so exciting.

But surprisingly, very few. Of course, we moved an enormous number of people through Austria. There was one Polish doctor that I kept in touch with for years. He came here to this country and was on the faculty of the Yale Medical School for a while. I have since lost complete track of him--Kwisavelvich; a nice man, a nice man.

- Morris: Was this your first extensive contact with the Jewish community and their philosophical beliefs?
- Pomeroy: No. I had had a lovely experience in Los Angeles when I worked for the emergency relief program. Irving Lipsitch was the director of the Jewish Welfare Federation in Los Angeles at that time.

He was also a member of the Los Angeles County Relief Committee and later of the State Relief Commission. I had gotten to know him quite well. That was really my introduction to the Jewish commitment to human needs, humanitarianism.

Certainly, my experience in Europe with Jewish refugees was my first exposure to the Jewish culture over a broad segment of the population, the rich and the poor, the educated, the uneducated, the completely orthodox, and the reformed. In practically every Jewish camp we had reformed Jews and we had orthodox Jews. They had separate religious involvements. We ran kosher kitchens in all of the Jewish camps in addition to non-kosher kitchens.

Morris: Were their religious beliefs and practices important to many of the people in the camps?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, very. In fact, I would say that was more evident in the Jewish camps than it was in the others. They really attributed their survival to their faith. It was only a loving God that had protected them. I found a little of that among some of the Polish Catholics but not to the extent that it prevailed among the Jews.

Morris: How about the Protestant faiths?

Pomeroy: Somehow you just didn't have a great sense of the terrific importance of their religion to them.

Morris: How about in your own case? You had been raised a Catholic.

Pomeroy: Of course, I was at that period in my life where my excommunication from the Catholic church was a reality because I had been divorced and remarried without dispensation. I went to mass every Sunday just as if I hadn't been excommunicated [laugh] and was very close to the Catholic clergy in Austria and to my friends in the National Catholic Welfare Conference, but there was a--it's really quite difficult to describe--there was a sense of loss. I knew I had lost something.

There was a sense of a little detachment, but there was also a holding on to the whole form in a way that I think probably was very much encouraged by the fact that Austria is a very Catholic country and also the principal religious advisor to the commanding general and the American minister was a monsignor by the name of Roman J. Newar, with whom I became great pals. He always insisted that the day would come when I would be right with the church and that I was not to worry about it, that something was going to happen. He didn't know what. He certainly could not have foreseen what did happen, believe me. But it was a link, it was a

tie, and it gave my mother great joy when she came to visit me in Vienna to find that the monsignor was my great friend. That comforted her a great deal.

Morris: Did you have a kind of a religious commitment to this work that you were doing and that the whole program was doing?

Pomeroy: No, I don't think I viewed it at all in a sense of doing God's work. I viewed it as a very logical outcome of the concern that I had about people through the whole unemployment relief experience and to a lesser degree but somewhat related through the war housing experience. These things were activities that had an element of reward in them because you were doing something for people.

Move to Salzburg; Winding Down in 1952

Morris: Did you move to Salzburg? Was there some kind of a reorganization or retrenchment in 1952?

Pomeroy: Yes, we reorganized the mission on the first of July 1950. The general, our chief of mission, and his legal counsel stayed in Vienna and we moved all the rest of the mission to Salzburg, made that our headquarters. As deputy chief of mission, I was in charge of the operation there.

Morris: Why was it appropriate to move the operation?

Pomeroy: It was more the center of the activities that we were dealing with in terms of both camps and the resettlement. If all of our voluntary agency personnel, all of our resettlement mission people, had to come to Vienna and be accredited before they could begin any of their work in the camps, there was really a loss of time and energy and expense when the actual work they were going to do was going to take place in Salzburg, in Klagenfurt in the British zone where we had an area headquarters, and in Innsbruck in the French zone. So Salzburg was equidistant practically from Innsbruck and Klagenfurt and only half the distance from either of those places than it would be to go to Vienna. So it was a practical consideration.

Morris: Apparently in Austria some of the people served by IRO did not live in camps. There were those who lived in the surrounding community. Did you deal with those?

- Pomeroy: The independent-living refugees were the ones who one way and another had some resources. We dealt with them in terms of resettlement on exactly the same basis we dealt with everybody else, if they chose to resettle. They did form the nucleus, of course, of the people who decided to remain within the Austrian economy. They were pretty well settled.
- Morris: Then in Salzburg, it looks as if the IRO was beginning to wind down, that the staff was cutting back and there were debates in the UN about continued--
- Pomeroy: Continued support. The first year that we were in Salzburg, we went along at full tilt. Beginning with the next July, there was a plan for the liquidation of IRO within the following year, from July of '51 to July of '52. The UN was in the process of recognizing a new agency, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, as a successor agency to IRO.
- Morris: It was the high commissioner that had an office of refugees.
- Pomeroy: Yes, that's right and he then set up operations in a number of countries for the resettlement of people both into and out of the countries where they operated.
- Morris: So you were again presiding over the completion of an emergency service.
- Pomeroy: I left before we finished the liquidation. I know why I decided. I wanted to be home for my mother's eighty-fifth birthday. So I left in November and got to California-- Mother's birthday was the seventh of December and I got to California on the sixth! [laughs]

Legacy for International Social Agencies

- Morris: Have you ever had any thoughts as to whether that experience or postwar experience in general had as an impact on U.S. social agencies and how they operated or their concerns?
- Pomeroy: There is no question in my mind that the Quakers, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Church World Service, and the American Joint Distribution Committee, those four, came out of the postwar experience with a clear commitment to refugees wherever they are. I think that's the genesis of the significant policies that all of those organizations now have with respect to refugees that fall within their particular category of interest.

We see it today with what the Catholics have done with refugees from the Orient. We see it with what AJDC is doing with respect to Russian refugees. The Church World Service has maintained continuing sponsorship of refugees ever since post-World War II. The Quakers, I think, probably went into it with more of a history of concern for refugees than any of the others had had, and I think it has simply been strengthened and maintained.

So in terms of that aspect of human welfare, I think the post-World War II experience had a significant part in leading those organizations to maintaining their concern.

Now, to the extent that they have had any impact on local welfare services, I think there is some. One has been a focus on the part of some of our agencies on developing resources that will aid newcomers. The other is probably a little more subtle, but I think it is very real. The whole refugee movement into the United States, and the maintaining of the openness of our borders, has certainly created some questions in the minds of some people with respect to how far are we going to go in acceptance and integration. We find that with respect to unemployment insurance, with respect to social security, with respect to medical benefits. All I have are some questions for which there are no answers. But I see some of the refugee problems having had an impact on our domestic services and governmental entitlements. My own view is that once we accept people within our borders, invite them to become citizens, there should be no question about entitlement.

Morris: As you describe it, I get a sense that I haven't before that there has been a continuing need for help for refugees in some part of the world. It seems to be part of the twentieth century.

Pomeroy: It's a part of the twentieth century without any question.

Morris: Your description of self-help mechanisms amongst the people living in the camps leads me to wonder if there was any line of conscious continuity between that and some of the self-help programs that developed in the United States some years later.

Pomeroy: I think not, but I don't know. I don't have any recollections that any self-help programs that developed around this country as they did in the sixties and seventies were influenced by the participation of people who emerged from the refugee scene.

Morris: I think people like Red Stephenson, who worked with the American Friends Service Committee overseas and then in the sixties with the black community in North Richmond.*

*See E.L. Stephenson interview in "Bay Area Foundation Leaders," Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Pomeroy: Yes, they might well have connection. I have not really spent any amount of time since coming home from Europe in any of the communities where there were substantial numbers of refugees accepted for resettlement. Some of the midwestern cities, relatively small cities, took as many as twenty-five families under the urging of possibly their churches and their service groups. In those communities, I would think there was probably a rather substantial impact.

Selecting Fulbright Scholars

Morris: Where does the Fulbright Commission fit in here?

Pomeroy: Oh, that was an honor I would say. I was asked by the American administrator, who chaired the Fulbright Commission, to serve as a member for Austria. The Commission was responsible for the selection of Fulbright scholars to go from Austria to the United States. I served for three years.

We did not have anything to do with the placement of the American Fulbright scholars who were going to Austria. That was done by an Austrian element of the Fulbright Commission. We were responsible for the selection of the young Austrians who went to the United States.

Morris: I am very familiar with the American students who went to Europe. I don't think I had ever heard before that there was another half of it.

Pomeroy: Oh, it was an exchange and there was always an equal number. Senator Fulbright had such a brilliant idea. The funding came from an Austrian component that paid for the Americans there, but it was American money. I've forgotten the source of the funding, but it did make American funds available at both ends.

I think we had about twenty young scholars a year that came for anywhere from one to three years depending on where they were in their--they were all post-college graduates.

Morris: You would have helped then in picking the first of the Austrian young people to come to this country.

Pomeroy: Yes, I think there had been one class, one group, prior to the time I went on the commission. It was an honorable assignment in Vienna at that point. I was certainly the only American woman on it; I think we had a couple of people from the embassy and a couple of American businessmen.

Morris: Who were doing business by then?

Pomeroy: Yes, and I had some useful association with some elements in the Austrian government where it made it easy to do some checking and verifying of information and interviewing. One of the things we did (which most of us had to do with interpreters because we didn't speak fluent German) we had to interview at least one of the references that were offered by the young scholars. This was in addition to some interviewing that was done with their college professors or administrators and so on.

Morris: Would these be like American college students of that era, somewhat older than the stage of their education would indicate and who may have been in the military themselves?

Pomeroy: We had no students who had had military service because they would have been in the German army, and in that period, immediately post-World War II, that was not acceptable. They were all students who had just finished the university and had escaped military service by whatever means. They were all younger. They were like twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two. We used to talk among ourselves about what kind of influence did these kids have to have to avoid military service. Even as there were people exempt from military service in this country. They, I'm sure, had achieved it on the basis of either preparing for essential study, such as the professions--engineers, doctors, I don't think lawyers would have been considered essential--

I have a sense that most of the students we saw were candidates in history, political science, government, engineering, yes; social work, yes. I can remember my enthusiasm about two or three. Incidentally, the great majority of the first Fulbright scholars were young men, but there were a few women. It was a delightful, completely out of the rut of what I was doing every day, and there was a very warm sense, that this may be furthering good understanding between countries.

IX TIME OF TROUBLES

Harold Pomeroy in Alaska ##

Morris: By the time you were coming back for your mother's eighty-fifth birthday, where was Harold Pomeroy?

Pomeroy: Harold Pomeroy had gone to Alaska to homestead.

Morris: You and he had decided to--?

Pomeroy: We hadn't really. That decision didn't come until about a year after he went to Alaska. He is still in Alaska to the best of my knowledge, and is married to the former Russian refugee he married following our divorce in 1955. I have no idea what he's doing, but he is still alive. I know that because my nephew by marriage, who is very, very close to me, told me that Harold was in southern California recently visiting a brother down there.

Morris: So he was not available to be of much moral support or help when you were going through your time of--

Pomeroy: No, not at all, not at all, and was not [laughs] very sympathetic. Actually he was right in what he did, but when I asked him for some money, when I was really down, rock bottom, he refused to give me any, and he was right because I would have just done the same thing with that that I did with quite a bit of money I came home from Europe with that I went through. He wasn't harmful, but he certainly wasn't helpful.

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Pomeroy: When I came home, I had had some suggestions from Donald Kingsley that he would have a job for me if I wanted it.

Morris: He was the last director of IRO.

Pomeroy: Yes, and it may be that in that capacity he said he would have a job for me. There was talk in the State Department of setting up programs in various embassies around the world to further some of the ideas of volunteerism that were very much a part of the American scene, and there were going to be some positions in the State Department related to that, although it had not been very clearly formulated at the time I was in Washington.

After a few months in southern California just playing golf and doing nothing, I came up to San Francisco, and decided to stay here. I stayed at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel. They put me up on the eighteenth floor looking out over the bay, and it was absolutely spectacular. I said to myself, well, I'm going to have to make a choice. Do I want to stay? I'd always said I wanted to live in San Francisco. I had to think twice. So, after I looked at that bay, it was in the spring, early spring, I said to myself one day, I'm not going to Washington and I'm not going to New York. I'm going to stay here. I don't know what I am going to do, but I am going to stay here.

So I called Kingsley, and I called my friends from the State Department and said, "Thank you, but take me off of your list because I am going to stay in California."

Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1952-54

Pomeroy: Then, the regional director for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, a lovely man, Fay Hunter, gave me an introduction to the federal Civil Defense Administration, where they were looking for somebody to perform the function of regional welfare officer. After a certain amount of dithering, even though I didn't have social work qualifications, they decided that I could be a regional welfare officer.

I went to work in the late spring. The job involved planning and coordination in the eleven western states for the development of housing, feeding, clothing--it did not include medical care, that was under a regional medical officer--in the event of disaster, either manmade or natural. It involved the welfare directors in the eleven western states and coordination with the other staff services of civil defense, which included engineering, medical care, food stockpiling, and fire services. We had a regional fire chief and we had a regional law enforcement person, and we were

presumably the planning group that would attempt to guide the states in the development of coordinated, uniform plans to deal with emergencies.

Morris: What a tall order.

Pomeroy: [sighs] It was a very tall order.

Morris: At that time, and for quite a spell in there, the idea of civil defense was not getting very strong public acceptance.

Pomeroy: No, it wasn't. It was getting very little attention and we were little voices crying in the wilderness. The Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) was a separate government agency at that time with its own budget, with a federal administrator.

My particular chores consisted of going around and meeting with state welfare directors--it was very interesting--and then working out with them plans for participation in state conferences on social work and going with them to some of the major cities in their respective states to see what we could do to inspire local effort in the organization of welfare services.

This two-year period coincided with the progressive nature of my alcoholism. I was living alone in San Francisco, commuting to our office in Berkeley, and on planes and trains steadily. I traveled three weeks out of four and did not at all accomplish what I had originally thought of as being my great objective. I had hoped to put some roots down and put my feet up. I wanted to become a part of the community. Well, this didn't do it, of course.

The first year of that job was thoroughly satisfactory. I was responsible for developing and putting on a major training conference on civil defense welfare services out at St. Mary's College that was considered very successful, but the second year was fraught with problems. By June of the second year, I had sought my first help in connection with my drinking problem. From then on it was a year of misadventure, and I think we deal with that in terms of the whole alcoholism story, and [laughs] what else there is to say about civil defense, I'm not sure I know! Got a few questions?

Morris: Not really. I don't think it's central to the story of your professional and personal growth. What about how what you were doing then compares with what is going on now in the 1980s? There seems to be a rather massive federal commitment to civilian preparation for nuclear or seismic catastrophe.

Pomeroy: A commitment to something that some of us are pretty well convinced can't work anyway.

Morris: Public attitudes don't seem to have changed very much; in the early 1950s, civil defense didn't have much public support.

Pomeroy: Not at all. It really was extraordinarily difficult to mobilize any kind of community action. I can remember going to social work conferences. I did a circuit of five social work conferences: Nevada, Oregon, Washington, California, and one in Arizona.

I would be billed as the speaker at a major session and there would be a really noticeable lack of interest.

Morris: How strong a sense of commitment and support did you get from Washington for this apparatus? This would be the Eisenhower administration.

Pomeroy: I think we received from Washington a sense of desperation: [taps for emphasis] "We've got to do this. Now, let's get this thing going."

Morris: Because we were caught with our shoes off in 1940 and '41?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: We were then beginning a period of twenty years of planning all kinds of public services. None of that interest carried over to civil defense?

Pomeroy: One of the things that I think clearly puts a mark on how important civil defense was—I guess the office had been in Berkeley for at a least year before I joined the staff, but shortly after I left, which was in June of '54--the whole regional office moved up to Santa Rosa because they no longer felt that it was necessary in the planning process to be in the center of things. If they were ever needed, there was a much better possibility of their surviving if they were in Santa Rosa.

Morris: I think it was two or three years later than that there was a rash of the building of individual, private bomb shelters.

Pomeroy: Yes, individual bomb shelters were getting to be very big right about then, '53 and '54, yes. [laughs] For some reason they were bigger in the Middle West than they were on the coast.

Morris: Who was your chief and who were the people that you worked with?

Pomeroy: The chief in the regional office was a man by the name of Henry Eaton, who was a former fire chief from Los Angeles.

Morris: Not a military person?

Pomeroy: No, there were no military people at all involved.

Morris: Did he feel a sense of mission or did he feel that somebody had to do this?

Pomeroy: He had a great sense of mission, but he had difficulty inspiring his staff. The staff was made up principally of people who had retired from a lot of other things. There was a retired police chief in charge of law enforcement, a retired army colonel in charge of transportation, a retired man from the Army Corps of Engineers who was in charge of the engineering. It was kind of a home for retired folk! [laughs] I am not quite sure how I got into it.

Morris: That must not have been terribly helpful for you at that point either personally or professionally.

Pomeroy: No, professionally they really didn't understand why all these social workers had to be involved. I think the reason that Eaton agreed to hire me (and I guess rewrote the job specs in order to hire somebody who did not have social welfare training, because Washington had originally prescribed a social worker for the job) was he felt that I could probably bridge the gap with the social work community and still relate to this corps of people unrelated to "practical" people.

Morris: The nuts and bolts.

Pomeroy: Yes, the whole nuts and bolts group.

Morris: That shows a certain amount of perception.

Pomeroy: Because that was the kind of a bridging thing I had been doing. Without social work training, I had been working with social workers over the years, yes.

Morris: Is this something that has either bothered you personally or you have felt has been an obstruction in your own work?

Pomeroy: I never felt that it did, Gaby, and the reason, I think, is because of what appeared to be complete acceptance by people like Eva Hance, Emily Wooley in Los Angeles in the thirties. They seemed to respect the fact that at least I was trained in the law

and appeared to have a good mind and that I sat on the board of the State Social Welfare Conference. My peers didn't seem to feel that there was any lack of understanding on my part.

I think what happened was that I grew up enough with the people in the social work community as I moved along doing various jobs, so that I had adequate respect and regard for their expertise, and that I could apply what appeared to be good administration and make it work without demeaning or limiting what they felt was important. I think I have served in many situations as a bridge between a nonprofessional social work community and the professional social worker.

[Interview 6: June 2, 1982]##

Morris: In our last session, you were discussing the civil defense job and that it was a rootless kind of existence and not terribly satisfying in terms of the work that you were doing.

Pomeroy: There was a lack of serious concern on the part of the various states that we were dealing with about civil defense development. It was as if the state officials that we dealt with, the state welfare directors, governors' offices, state directors of emergency planning, etc., would put aside maybe one day a month that they would concern themselves about civil defense and the rest of the time they were off about whatever their normal business was.

As regional civil defense staff, we failed to get the response that we felt the critical nature of our job justified. On a more personal level, my original interest in coming back to San Francisco had been, as I think I said earlier, to try and put some roots down and put my feet up and become a part of the community, and this job offered no opportunity to do that.

Morris: Could you tell if that was a resistance to the concept of civil defense or whether it was a sort of a general lack of interest in planning as a proper governmental function?

Pomeroy: I think it was an inability on the part of most people who were involved in it to really believe that civil defense was an important activity. Civil defense generally was not focussed on natural catastrophe. It was civil defense based on the cold war and most people never believed that bombs would fall, thank God.

Drinking Patterns

Morris: When the five of us were talking last week about alcoholism and your different experiences,* you mentioned that by 1952, when you were in the Civil Defense Administration, you were drinking heavily.

Pomeroy: I was drinking very heavily, was beginning to miss work because of hangovers and making up stories. After you have run through nine cases of flu in two months, people began to be somewhat disbelieving, and you manufacture all of the other excuses. My alcoholism appeared to progress very rapidly.

I had certainly been a heavy drinker all my life. My drinking started during Prohibition, which was really not uncommon among my peers. I think we probably drank for very much the same reason that kids use pot [marijuana] today--it was illegal [laughs] and nobody approved of it, so we did it.

Morris: As a student?

Pomeroy: Yes, it started when I graduated from high school and then went into law school. Drinking did not interfere with school at all. It was an occasional weekend thing through college and really did not become a more than a weekend thing until World War II. But it was heavy drinking. It was more drinking than most of my peers did because of, apparently, a very high tolerance for alcohol. I was always the person who could drive people home. I was always functioning in spite of the amount of drinking, and I now understand that represented a very high tolerance for alcohol.

Morris: That is described now as one of the signals of--

Pomeroy: One of the signals of concern. As you begin to talk to young people, those who have a very high tolerance for alcohol, you say, "Beware," because the normal tolerance or the average tolerance would create problems for people very early. Interestingly enough, this high tolerance seems to correlate with a very high tolerance for anesthesia.

Morris: The nervous system somehow functions differently.

*See Chapter XI, group discussion, recorded May 26, 1982.

Pomeroy: Whatever the chemistry is; when I came home from Europe in 1947 or '48, I guess, for major stomach surgery, they had a frightful time anesthetizing me. They used everything in the book and finally ended up with curare as an anesthetic.

Morris: That was very innovative at that time.

Pomeroy: Very innovative. They were terrified because it took them so long to bring me out. But it has been since learned that many alcoholics seem to have this same high tolerance for anesthesia. It takes twice as much to put them under as it does most people.

However, my drinking, although heavy, did not become at all compulsive until after World War II, and then it was in Europe. We were attached to the army and our whole social life was involved with the military and with the diplomatic group in Vienna. Interestingly enough, it never interfered with my functioning at work, functioning socially, functioning in any setting I was in.

Morris: Were there other people in the group with whom you were familiar who were--?

Pomeroy: I would say were drinking about the same way. The military is a wonderful place to find heavy drinkers.

Morris: Similarly so with the people working with the displaced persons?

Pomeroy: Not so much, no, because my social relationships that involved drinking were almost entirely with the army people I knew. You did not find any heavy drinking among the Viennese population, and you certainly didn't find any heavy drinking among the other nationals with whom we worked. It's really an American phenomenon, generally speaking.

Morris: Would some of that have to do with the fact that there were service clubs around, and I seem to recall that liquor was very cheap.

Pomeroy: I am sure that had something to do with it, yes. But again, while I certainly was aware of heavy drinking and the kind of drinking that, to look back on, one doesn't think of as being just pure social drinking, I certainly wasn't conscious of getting into any trouble as the result of drinking until I came home from Europe, and that's when I began to have a sense of real dependency.

Awareness of Dependency

Pomeroy: Without much basis for it, I sort of pinpointed crossing the Atlantic, coming home by sea as the time when I crossed the line from having a choice about drinking to the point of no choice once I had taken a drink. As deputy director of IRO in Austria I was given red carpet treatment on the ship because we had moved lots of people with that shipping line. I was seated at the captain's table and spent a lot of time with some interesting people aboard, among them an author who wrote popular books.

This was the end of 1951 and the author and his wife had been traveling. She was a darling person and she was having absolute conniptions because he was a drunk. She was determined that she was not going to let him spoil the evening of the captain's party for her. So I connived with the ship's doctor an elaborate charade of getting him knocked out, telling him that it was a hang-over cure. In retrospect, it was one of the funniest scenes I have ever been involved in! But I dreamed this whole thing up because she was so charming and I was anxious to have her enjoy the evening—very helpful.

Before the party we put him out of commission for the whole evening, and I never knew whether he forgave that or not. I kept in touch with her for a while and then, as those kind of casual acquaintanceships do, they fall apart. In later years it was interesting to know that he stopped drinking and spoke about it. [laughs] So we both came to the same end!

Morris: But at that point, you were not concerned about yourself?

Pomeroy: I certainly was not consciously concerned about myself at that point, but by the time I landed in New York and spent a little time visiting friends there, and then had driven south to North Carolina and on to Texas, visiting with people on the way, I realized that I was doing a lot of drinking by myself.

I got to my mother's in Hollywood and stayed with her for several months. I played golf and visited with old friends and one thing and another, and began to realize I was doing a lot of drinking, but put it down in my own mind to the fact that, after all, I was having a vacation because I had worked for so many years. I'm sure I thought that when I went to work everything would be fine. Then I made up my mind I wanted to come up to San Francisco, that I did not want to stay in southern California, and that I probably did not want to go East. My brother was very

insistent that I stay in California. He had had the responsibility of the relationship with Mother for ten years while I was away and it was time for me to share it.

Morris: Were there some people in San Francisco that you felt particularly inclined to be around?

Pomeroy: It was the place, it was the place. I had lived here for two years before I went to Washington and I had said then, "I'll be back in San Francisco," that this was the place where I wanted to live the rest of my life if I could.

Morris: Were you beginning to get comments from your family or close friends that they were concerned about your drinking?

Pomeroy: No, nobody, no. I guess my mother had, in her own rather subtle way. She would say, "Do you really want a drink," that sort of thing. But it was certainly not any open confrontation of the fact that anybody thought I was drinking too much. I am sure that at that point it would have made no difference. It would not have had any effect whatever.

But once I came up here, I lived in the old Sutter Hotel down on Sutter and Kearney for about three months and did quite a bit of solitary drinking then, but still not to the point where it was impairing my functioning.

I was in the civil defense job for just about two years, '52 to '54. Then I certainly was on my best behavior for the early part of that experience, but by the time I had been there a year, my drinking was really beginning to interfere with my work. I was missing Mondays. I managed to--apparently by the reports, I did some brilliant pieces of planning. I put on a major training conference for welfare officers in the western states out at St. Mary's College and planned the whole content of it, was able to draw in the people to do the various training assignments and so on, so that I was still functioning effectively. But I was beginning to miss more work.

Seeking Help: Mountain Vista Farm

Pomeroy: On my own--it was in June of 1953, as a matter of fact--there was a Monday morning when I simply couldn't go to work. That was it. There had been other Monday mornings, but I always called up and had some excuse and so on. This time I called a friend of mine

whose husband I knew was an alcoholic, because she had talked about it, and asked her if she would come and see me. I said that I just couldn't go to work and I needed help.

She came and she was very wise. She was very warm and caring, but she also was not interested in any of my excuses or any of my conversation about it. She said, "There isn't a thing that I can do for you, but if you are willing to talk to somebody from Alcoholics Anonymous, I will put you in touch with somebody." She put me in touch. She called the man who had been helping her husband and asked him if he would come and see me. I managed to pull myself together and take a shower and get dressed so that I could see him in sort of a civilized fashion, though very shaky and very sick.

He, too, was very wise. He wasted no sympathy on me at all. He said, "If you are willing to go up to a place up in the country where you won't be able to get a drink, and where they can introduce you to AA"--and I had never heard about AA. This was completely new to me. There was an article by Jack Alexander in the Saturday Evening Post,* which was published, I guess while I was in Europe because I certainly had not seen it, nor heard of it. But I at that point was perfectly willing to go anywhere. I think if somebody had suggested standing on my head at Fourth and Market, I might have considered doing it because I was by this time well aware that I was in serious trouble.

Morris: Physically?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, mentally, morally, and every other way. I was a sick, sick person by this time.

Morris: Were you eating?

Pomeroy: Probably not very well, no--chronic alcoholics do not eat very well. So I called the office and said that I wanted a week's sick leave. By this time I had very little sick leave left, or maybe I said I wanted a week's vacation, and went up to a place in the country which turned out to be Mountain Vista Farm.

Morris: Is this what you call the funny farm?

*"Drunkards Best Friend," Saturday Evening Post, April 1, 1950.
Reprinted in Family Circle, June 1983.

Pomeroy: This is the funny farm, and ended up staying two weeks. I was absolutely delighted with the place. I thought it was simply wonderful. The people were delightful. The man who ran it, Truman Harley, was a former vice-president of the Bank of America who himself was a recovered alcoholic and who had had a very difficult time. He had burned down his house and lost his family and so on. His wife had come back to him with his children; they were all part of this place by the time I got to it.

Morris: How long had it been operating?

Pomeroy: I would guess by that time about three or four years. It was the first one of its kind in this part of the country. There were others that came afterwards that were more or less modeled on it. But it was the first of its kind. It was very simple. It was good food that you were--I wouldn't say required to eat, but you were certainly persuaded that it was good for you. It was dietetically very good. I mean you got no carbonated drinks and that sort of thing. You got fresh juices and very simple, really good food. Esther, Truman's wife, did the cooking with the help of anybody who was staying there. As soon as people were able, they shared in chores, whether it was setting the table. We all did our own rooms, of course, and we did other things around the place.

Morris: How many people would stay there at a time?

Pomeroy: It had a capacity of about fourteen and it was generally eight, ten, twelve people. Oh, at the end of two weeks I was in great form. I felt fine. I had almost complete recovery.

Morris: Yes, I have been impressed with this, the ability of alcoholics I have known who just make a miraculous physical recovery.

Pomeroy: Yes, unbelievable really. You can't understand it at all. [pause]

X IMPORTANCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

First Encounters

Pomeroy: There was an AA meeting there that was held on Friday nights and then we went out in a couple of cars to AA meetings that were held in Sonoma and Napa and Santa Rosa. At that time, there was generally one meeting in each area. They were held on different nights so that people who wanted to could move around in that Napa-Sonoma-Santa Rosa triangle, and go to as many as three or four meetings a week.

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Morris: How was Mountain Vista Farm different from what was then generally called a drying-out facility?

Pomeroy: Its fundamental difference was that it was totally oriented toward Alcoholics Anonymous. The drying-out facilities in San Francisco--there were two or three of them--were purely drying-out, and they gave you medication. You got no medication at Mount Vista Farm. You got orange juice and Karo syrup.

Morris: Heavy and sweet.

Pomeroy: That's right. That's the replacement for alcohol and it still is probably the best way to detoxify anybody. It's nicer if it's done in a blender than if you have to whip it up with a spoon. But that's the fundamental difference. There were no drugs used and the orientation was totally toward Alcoholics Anonymous.

Morris: At that point, in '52, how long had AA been established in San Francisco?

Pomeroy: The first San Francisco group formed in 1939. By the early forties, there were two or three groups in San Francisco. By ten years later, because this is the early fifties, it had proliferated so there was a group in each of a number of little towns. It had started in Marin County by then. The wonderful woman who started it there was a woman who had been a Red Cross volunteer. She, at the time of her death, had the longest volunteer history of anybody in this part of the country with the American Red Cross and she was also the first member of AA in Marin County.

Morris: How had she come in contact with AA?

Pomeroy: Her own problem. She probably had written to New York. The Jack Alexander article is what started people communicating with AA in New York from various parts of the country. The article gave a box number to which people could write.

Morris: By the time Alexander wrote his article, there was a central office to act as a clearing house?

Pomeroy: It was probably all volunteer and Bill Wilson had a box number that he took responsibility for and got volunteers to help him and his wife Lois, of course, who was really a tremendous force in getting AA started.

Drying-Out Efforts

Morris: We talked about the anonymity that is in the title and has been been a tradition in the Fellowship. Did you feel a need to be anonymous, that you were under a stigma?

Pomeroy: Oh, heavens, yes; oh, heavens, yes! My passion for anonymity was so great that in the first year, during which I made eight trips up to that farm for various periods of time, I never told anyone where I was going. My early exposure did not take--

Morris: Why not?

Pomeroy: For a variety of reasons. I think that I was looking not as much for a way to stop drinking, but more for a way to drink without getting in trouble. I continued that search with a certain amount of vigor. I was up there in June for two weeks, and for July and August I faithfully went back up there every Friday night for a meeting and I did not drink for two months. I would not go

to a meeting in San Francisco because there was the possibility that I would see somebody who would know me. That's how I had to protect my anonymity.

In September of that year, I had to go to Washington and met up with old friends and had to be poured on an airplane to come back. I went on a real drunk in the hotel in Washington, and that was the beginning of a series. I had been up there in June, I came back from Washington; I went up there again for another week, and I was up there again twice more before the first of the year.

Then my illustrious superiors, who were extraordinarily kind to me, said, "You're going to have to deal with this problem or else you're going to have to leave government service," and put me on an enforced leave of absence for five weeks during which I stayed at the farm.

Morris: They recognized that alcohol was your problem and that something could be--?

Pomeroy: That's right. They felt that I was trying to do something about it and not successfully, but that they would give me another chance at it. I was up there for five weeks and at the end of five weeks, the deputy regional director came up and talked to Truman and said, "Do you really think that she has got a grasp on this," and Truman said, "Yes, I think so," on the strength of which they took me back.

So I went back to work and then I still went up there Friday nights. I didn't go to any other meetings. That was probably March. By May we had a series of state conferences of social work to attend. There was California, Arizona, Nevada, the state of Washington, Idaho, and Utah; those I remember. My assignment was to go to every one of those conferences and I was on the program at every conference to talk about welfare services and civil defense.

Morris: Had you set up your meetings there or had the social work conference people come and requested this?

Pomeroy: I think I had been responsible for spending a lot of time on the telephone saying "Social workers have got to hear about civil defense and welfare services. Now, you just make some time on that program." So off I went, and I guess California was all right. I didn't seem to get into any difficulties there. I got in and out of Washington without getting into serious trouble. I

got in and out of Utah without getting into serious trouble. In Arizona, I made every one of these speeches and I was told they were splendid--you know, the brilliant drunk performing.

I was on a radio program in Phoenix following the social work conference and the state director of civil defense in Phoenix had to pull me off the air. I was drunk and not functioning. I was let go up to Oregon, sobered up to continue this swing. At the Multnomah Hotel in Portland, I did my social work piece, then proceeded to lock myself in my hotel room. Oregon is a state store state, and I paid my little fee and went down and bought probably two or three bottles of bourbon and locked myself in my hotel room and drank to the point where I didn't answer the phone, I didn't answer the door, and they finally got the management and the house detective and opened my door and then sent for the state director of civil defense, under whose friendly eye I was presumably there. He popped me into a hospital for twenty-four hours and then popped me out again and on to a plane. He sent me back to San Francisco and he called the regional director and said, "You mustn't let this woman loose any more!"

Morris: Oh, dear. Had you been traveling alone on this trip?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes; and beloved by everybody, everybody taking such nice care of me. The man in Arizona sobering me up and then sending me on my way. So that was the end. That was the point at which the regional director said, "You may either resign or you will be fired."

It took some time actually. By this time, they got the regional medical director involved, a wonderful man by the name of Bill Stiles from the university, and with some members of the staff who were very fond of me--and they were wonderful, devoted people. They did all kinds of things to help me. They used to devote time between my junkets driving me to the farm, they would make plans with me so that somebody would be spending time with me so I wouldn't drink. We would play Scrabble and we would do all kinds of things. They were devoted friends as well as colleagues.

Morris: Were you supportive of these plans? You were willing to be with them and--

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, I thought they were being wonderful to me. I had a couple of more stays at the farm in the meantime. Finally, they had decided that AA wasn't going to work for me.

Morris: Who decided?

Pomeroy: The staff, my friends on the staff, and the doctor. There was a wonderful woman who was in charge of volunteer programs in civil defense, Dorothy Pearl, and there was a neat engineer whose brother was a recovered alcoholic in an important telephone company job in Texas--people who really cared.

Morris: With them you were able to talk about drinking as a problem?

Pomeroy: Oh, by this time, it was not a secret. This was open discussion. They had decided that AA wasn't going to work for me and that I was going to have to be committed. In those days, you could commit somebody to a mental institution by going to a judge and saying, "This person is a hopeless alcoholic," and they would lock them up for about ninety days. They were all ready to do this when somebody remembered that I had family in southern California.

Turning Point

Morris: Yes, I wondered what kind of contact you had had with them during this period.

Pomeroy: Family contact but nothing having to do with (quote) "my problem" (unquote). So they sent for my brother. They decided that they shouldn't take the legal responsibility for committing me.

Morris: That seems to have restrained people--

Pomeroy: They sent for my brother and my brother brought my mother with him, which [laughs] I thought was a rather foul blow, but of course turned out to be the wisest thing he could have done because--

Morris: You didn't want your mother to know?

Pomeroy: No, of course not. She had suffered through two divorces. I didn't think she should have to suffer this too, but there it was. So the debate went on as to whether I was going to be committed or not. This was what my friends recommended, and Mother and my brother had no knowledge or experience with this, so they had no basis for any disagreement.

Morris: What did you say to the idea?

Pomeroy: Oh, I said I didn't care for that, thank you very much, and said that I believed I could sober up enough to persuade a judge that I can do this on my own. So we went back and forth and back and forth for several days about this.

Finally, my mother said to my brother, "Go home, and I will see what I can do with her," and it was she who made the decision that I could have one last chance up at the farm.

Morris: She had talked to people in AA and become familiar with the program?

Pomeroy: She hadn't really talked to anyone but the doctor and the others from the office. No, she had not talked to anybody from AA. The people from the office who had sent for them were the ones who explained that I had been trying to do this through AA and had not succeeded.

I don't know what her motivation was really that made her decide that I could have one last chance. I guess it was sort of "if we can't get her committed, we've got to do something."

Morris: There is stigma on a family or there certainly was in the fifties of sending a member of one's family to a mental hospital.

Pomeroy: Oh, heavens, yes, of course. She had enough faith to gamble on one more try at this. So I went up there on the thirteenth of June, 1954, and stayed there five weeks and that was the turning point. It was a year to the day, incidentally; it was the thirteenth of June that I went up there the first time, it was the thirteenth of June I went back the second time for a protracted stay.

For the first time, I became completely willing to do whatever had to be done in order to stay sober. I had come to believe that I could not drink. I had proved that without any reservation or any question at all. In the meantime, I should say, I had spent some time with a psychiatrist at the suggestion of a doctor. I had gone back and had long consultations with a couple of Catholic priests, and I had unfortunately been the [laughs] beneficiary of a very foolish doctor who had introduced me to phenobarbital and benzedrine that allowed me during part of that last year of drinking to stop the shakes with the phenobarbital and stay awake with the benzedrine until evening when I would drink again.

Morris: Your system must have been a mess.

Pomeroy: Oh, my system was a considerable mess and it took a very brilliant young doctor to get me completely withdrawn from the barbiturates.

Morris: Here in San Francisco?

Pomeroy: Here in San Francisco. I sneaked the barbiturates up there, although I cut down on them enormously; but I still was dependent on them for sleeping at night. I had sense enough to know that if I did not get off them completely, I was always in danger when I withdrew from them of wanting to drink again. So I went to a doctor whose name was given to me by a woman who had some experience with drugs.

Morris: Is this the woman whose husband--?

Pomeroy: No, this was just a gal that I met who had been a pill pusher. She said that this doctor had been simply marvelous with B-12 and vitamin shots and very carefully supervised withdrawal, and within less than three weeks he had me completely free of any drug of any kind.

Morris: Including alcohol?

Pomeroy: Well, I was off alcohol by this time. I had had no alcohol since the thirteenth of June and this was when I came back in July. The regime at the farm was very simple, but very clear. You did a lot of reading about alcoholism and AA and about changing your life. Truman had a magnificent library that I was introduced to, and I really worked at it for the first time.

Morris: The library had been there when you had been there before.

Pomeroy: Yes, of course. It hadn't impacted on me. It was there and Truman was always pushing a book at one and saying, "You ought to be reading, you ought to be doing something." One time I went up there, drove myself up, took my typewriter and my golf clubs, and I thought he was going to throw me out of the place! That's how serious I was taking it.

Morris: The psychiatrists and the Catholic priests, what approach did they have to offer and why didn't that work?

Pomeroy: What the Catholic priests offered was what most clergymen still offer. You get the rare good one who realizes that prayer alone is not going to get a person to stop drinking. Both the priests--one was a Jesuit and one was a parish priest said if you had faith and prayed for help, you would not need to drink. Well, they were wrong. It takes something different.

The psychiatrist devoted more than three months that I went, seeing him twice a week at enormous cost. It was the very last of my money. All he was trying to do was find out why I drank and he really came close to driving me to the bridge. The only suicide attempt that I made, I made as the result of my feeling of total despair after I had spent three months with him and had finally stomped out of his office and said, "I am never coming back."

Morris: He produced the feeling of despair--

Pomeroy: Absolute, total despair. I had the feeling that he didn't have the faintest idea how I felt, he didn't understand why I had to drink, didn't understand at all. He was probing around trying to find out what had happened in my childhood that had made me feel so insecure that I had to drink. I was anything but insecure all my life.

Morris: You felt secure and in control of things even when you were drinking.

Pomeroy: I became thoroughly schizophrenic. I knew I was not in control of my drinking, I knew that. But other parts of my functioning life I felt reasonably in control of. Obviously, I was not in control of my life, but I was functioning in a portion of it satisfactorily. But I was rapidly deteriorating to the point where that too would go, and in fact did when "you either quit or you resign."

Morris: In reading Alcoholics Anonymous, they come back again and again to some kind of a spiritual experience as being what has turned the people in the case histories to the point where the AA program works for them. Is that what happened in your case?

Pomeroy: I had difficulty pinpointing any kind of a clearcut spiritual experience as a part of that turning point. I think the force, which certainly has spiritual aspects to it, the force that turned me around was twofold. It was the sense of absolute defeat--absolute. I was absolutely finished. Then my mother had faith. My mother believed that I could recover. She believed that I could change, even when I didn't because it was she who was responsible for saying, "Try this again. What you have told me about it makes me think that maybe this can work."

Working at Sobriety

Pomeroy: I haven't dealt with what happened when I came back in July, and that belongs here in the chronology of it. When I left the farm in July in 1954, I came back to San Francisco and several things

happened. A wonderful man that I met up there, an older man who was sort of a commuter as I had been, but who was Irish and Catholic and very intense--his name was Joe Brennan--had said to me, "The day that you come back to San Francisco, several of us are going to take you to an AA meeting that day in San Francisco, and we are going to introduce you to the Alano Club," which is the club that was founded by AA members. It's not part of AA, but it is developed by and for AA people or recovering alcoholics.

So the Tuesday that I came back, I drove down in the morning. A friend of mine came and got me and brought me down because I didn't have a car up there. True to his word, I met Joe Brennan at the Alano Club, and he and several others--and they were all men, there were no women in this group--took me to dinner and then to my first AA meeting in San Francisco. It was at the French church right up the street here.

That Tuesday downtown group became my home group. I went to AA meetings every night for at least a year. We had meetings at noon on Wednesdays and Sundays in those days and I went to those meetings, too. So I went to about nine meetings a week for about a year. There were a number of meetings at difficult places in San Francisco.

Morris: That is a heavy schedule.

Pomeroy: Steeping myself in it because I had come to accept what Truman had said to me, and that was "that if you will work half as hard at AA as you have worked at your drinking, you will have a pretty good chance at staying sober." I didn't like it. I didn't like any part of it to start with.

Morris: The AA meetings, the regular AA meetings?

Pomeroy: No, no,

Morris: Why not?

Pomeroy: Well, I thought I was pretty much above those people, superior intellect. I certainly had a much broader experience than most of them had, and was still not accepting with any grace the fact that my life had come to this. It didn't take too long, however, in that Tuesday meeting particularly, to begin to feel as if I "belonged".

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Morris: You were telling about your sponsors. It was after you had been going to the downtown group?

Pomeroy: For probably maybe six weeks, that these three wonderful gals, all older than I, said, "Do you have a sponsor?" I said, "No," because there were no women up at Truman's when I was there. So in one voice, they said, "Now you do. The three of us will be your sponsor." That turned out to be a marvelous, marvelous association because they came from three totally different backgrounds, but they were all well educated. One had been a nurse. One had, I think, probably been a product of a women's college in the East. I am not so sure about the third one. But I had to respect them. Here they were. They had varying periods of sobriety, not less than three or four years.

Morris: At the time that you became their sponsoree?

Pomeroy: Yes, and if I had a question, they were the ones, any one of them, that I could turn to and did. If for some reason I didn't appear at a meeting where I was expected, one of them would be on the telephone to say, "Are you okay? We don't want to bug you, but we just want to make sure that you don't need anything."

I got involved, trying to help a girl that I had met up at Truman's who had no place to go. She had family with money and they were willing to support her, but they didn't want any part of her. They said that if she could come and live with me, they would pay her expenses. So I bravely, with less than six months of sobriety, maybe four or five months, I said, yes, I would do this.

I had a flat on Telegraph Hill where I was still living. Doris came to live with me. She was drinking in no time flat. [tape interruption]

Morris: You took on the young woman and she began drinking again.

Pomeroy: Yes, she began drinking and it was my three sponsors, Harriet and Barbara and Jean, who carefully got me out of that by just insisting that she had to be delivered back to her family.

Morris: Was it usual to have three sponsors?

Pomeroy: [laughs] No, no! After they had gotten to know me a little bit and they realized that I had had so many times up at Truman's where there were no other women around, they felt that I needed the support, and it was almost sort of a joke, that "all right, three of us will be your sponsors." But it didn't turn out to be a joke. It turned out to be deadly serious because it was wonderful for me.

Morris: You characterize it as gentle and caring. Reading some of the testimonies in Alcoholics Anonymous, they make the point again and again that this is a very stern thing and that no quarter was given and so-and-so came in and said, "You've got a horrible hangover, you've really done it to yourself this time, haven't you?" That kind of a--

Pomeroy: Oh, tough love, no question about it and I have no doubt that if I had started drinking again, I would have gotten the benefit of some very tough love like shaking me from my shoulders. But one way and another, I managed to hang on and I did it by spending an inordinate amount of time in the Alano Club. I would go there from work in the afternoon. I would very often go back there with somebody after a meeting.

Morris: How does the Alano Club differ from an AA group per se?

Pomeroy: The Alano Club is a social club with a little restaurant. The San Francisco Alano Club is no more because of the fire. It was on Grant Avenue. [In 1983 a small Alano Club was operating at 414 Grant Avenue.] There were a couple of Chinese men who ran the little restaurant operation, so that you could always get a less expensive meal than you could any place else, and there was always somebody to talk to. The men played poker there and for a while there was a bingo game going.

They also had AA meetings there. They provided a setting to which a group could bring an AA meeting. They did not sponsor AA meetings, but it was available as a place in which a meeting could be held.

Morris: What about the business of being a woman and dealing with alcoholism? Was that part of the problem both at the farm and in accepting the idea of AA, that there were not terribly many women that you came in contact with?

Pomeroy: It was a fact that there were very few women. There were more women that came to the farm in later years, and so one met them there at meetings. But because I had operated in a world of work where I had frequently been a woman in an executive job where the other executives were men, i.e., the civil defense operation, I was not uncomfortable with the men in A.A. In much of my overseas work, I was a woman in a job where one would normally have found a man.

Because of that background, I did not feel particularly isolated at the farm. Once I came to accept the fact that I was there for one reason and one reason only, and that was to do

something about my drinking, the fact that I was doing it without the benefit of any companionship from women didn't seem very important. The same thing was pretty much true in AA meetings.

Morris: There were not too many--

Pomeroy: They were nothing like what there are now. I mean fifty percent of almost any meeting one goes to are likely to be women now. If we were fifteen percent women in the very early days, fifteen to twenty percent, that was the most. But I don't think it was any particular burden for me.

I was already oriented to being in the world of men and relating to them. Some women, particularly younger women as they began to come into AA, used to complain that the men were always making passes at them. I must have given off some kind of venom because I don't recall anybody, any man in AA ever making a pass at me. I would assume it's because I was there for the same reason they were and made a great point of that, that this disease is pretty universal. It doesn't matter who you are or what you are.

Physical Aspects

Morris: This book Under the Influence* that we have both been reading seems to emphasize an illness based-medical approach to alcoholism and seems to say that AA doesn't pay enough attention to the physical aspects. Was that your experience in the first AA groups you were a part of?

Pomeroy: Emphasis was placed on the characterization of alcoholism as a disease, and this meant that you had to get your body in good physical condition because it had deteriorated. You had to understand that the nature of this disease was such that if you used alcohol, it was going to, again, create a compulsion to drink and that abstinence was the only accepted treatment for the disease. So that the stress was on the fact of it being a disease, but without great emphasis or any emphasis at all really on it being treatable as a medical problem.

*Under the Influence, a Guide to the Myths and Realities of Alcoholism, James R. Milan and Katherine Ketcham, Madrona Publishers, Seattle, 1981.

Morris: Like measles or--

Pomeroy: Yes, and of course with the very intellectually attuned people, this created for them a difficulty because to understand the disease from an intellectual standpoint, it's difficult because it is not like any other disease. The supportive evidence of the American Medical Association and the World Health Organization were the factors that gave you a basis for saying to somebody, "I accept the fact that this is a disease because the American Medical Association says so and the World Health Organization says so," and theoretically at least you could stop debate on that basis.

Morris: Had that taken place at this point?

Pomeroy: It had not taken place at the point at which I came in. The National Council was talking about the disease of alcoholism. The AMA didn't make its pronouncement until 1957.

Morris: That's what I thought. For you personally was it harder to stop drinking or harder for you to accept this kind of disease concept of alcohol?

Pomeroy: Hmm, that's a question I have never pondered before. Well, clearly it was harder for me to stop drinking. There was no question about that. The fact that something that all of my peers--most of my peers--appeared to do without difficulty and that I couldn't do was an insult that I resented deeply for a long time, and resisted accepting; obviously it took a conclusive performance on my part of drinking unsuccessfully. The book [Alcoholics Anonymous] talks about surrendering, and what it talks about is surrendering our will with respect to drinking and accepting the reality of the fact that we can't drink.

I surrendered in total defeat because I had demonstrated--I had gotten into so much trouble, for goodness sake, that it was not a sweet surrender of my will. It was the surrender of total defeat of something that I had done from the time I was seventeen and finally in my forties had to say, "I can't do it."

I had been able to accept that and act upon it before I became sufficiently understanding and knowledgeable to know that I was dealing with a disease. I knew I was ill. There was no question about that. But to have alcoholism defined as a disease, it's perfectly true; it gave a little respectability to it.

Morris: The literature also says that the hardest part comes after you have achieved sobriety.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, I think this is--once you have been able to accept the reality of what your drinking has done to you and will do again if you drink again, once that has become very clear, then it takes time, and obviously it appears to be quite different with some people. There are many people who will tell you that once they made their decision to stop drinking, that there was some magic removal of any desire or compulsion to drink.

I didn't experience that but I believe other people when they say they do because there are too many people for whom I have just the highest respect and regard who apparently were relieved of any desire or compulsion to drink. I wasn't. For at least the very first year of my sobriety, there were many occasions when there was a real desire to take a drink. But I learned to combat it, conjuring up instantly a vision of what could happen if I took that drink, always in the blackest terms.

I could visualize again an incident. I was taken up to Truman's several times, as I have been wont to say, sometimes vertically, sometimes horizontally--and I was taken up there one time in my own car. Somebody drove my car up and I was in the back seat out cold and they were taking me out of the car to take me in. There were a series of little bedrooms in a compound around one building, which we gleefully called Maniac Manor.

I was being carried in there and it was raining and there was a mud puddle right in front of the house and they dropped me in the mud puddle. I remembered that, and during that first year or so, if I had a thought of taking a drink, I was able to say to myself, "Do you want to be dropped in that mud puddle again?"

Positive Mind Set

Pomeroy: So it's a process that one works one's way through, to build up very clear defenses against taking a drink. In due time, this passes and you develop a whole other mind set about it. For me, at least, the sort of next stage was one of really feeling very positive and very clearly that as long as I don't take a drink there isn't going to be anything in the world that's right for me to do that I can't do, and this was on a very positive plane.

There were some people who simply make all their life around AA. It was clear to me that I was not going to be comfortable doing that, and so after a couple of years--it took a couple of years--I began to move so that I didn't hesitate to accept an invitation to a cocktail party or to a dinner where wine was being

served and so on. As time went on, in those circumstances, there was a feeling of a certain amount of superiority as I watched somebody do a little too much drinking, the feeling that I would know what I said and who I was with and that I didn't have to worry about getting in my car and driving it.

Then you pass through those phases and just settle in and are completely comfortable with the fact that alcohol is not a part of your life and that it wouldn't add anything now if it were.

Morris: Did you go through a period when you were dealing with some negative attitudes from people who were not alcoholics?

Pomeroy: Interesting. I simply never experienced [it]. Now, very few people knew me as a drinking alcoholic because what I had done was to withdraw completely from old associations. The only people who knew me as a drinking alcoholic were the people I worked with. Socially, I had just cut myself off from all of the people I knew in San Francisco. As I began to sort of reintegrate myself into a social stream in San Francisco, I do not recall ever--yes, I do. I recall on maybe three occasions over a period of twenty-five years people saying, "Why don't you drink?"

With great ease, early on, I developed the ability to say, "I don't drink because I can't," and that answers it for most people. To the one or two people who say, "What do you mean, you can't drink," I say, "I'm an alcoholic." They are so absolutely floored by being confronted with it, that it does either one of two things. Either it stops all conversation, which is fine. You can go on and talk about that painting or that movie or whatever, or, as more frequently happens, you suddenly become a fountain of information for everybody who has an alcoholic brother, sister, husband, or wife.

It's become one of the ways I can help erase stigma.* I don't wear a little sign board saying, "I am an alcoholic." But if anybody asks me about not drinking or drinking, one of the ways in which one contributes to the knowledge and understanding of other people in the community is to be free and open about it.

Morris: What about people whose attitude was that alcoholism is a form of moral backsliding; that "if you just pull yourself together, you can stop drinking?"

*The Twelfth Step of AA includes the principle "to carry the message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

Pomeroy: I have encountered an enormous amount of ignorance in talking about it, but I have also encountered a lot of receptivity toward people being told--Now, I can remember when I left UBAC [United Bay Area Crusade] to become the director of the Council on Alcoholism, the chairman of the board hosted a little reception for me.

He said to me, "Florette, I can't understand why you would be leaving UBAC to go to, what is it, the Council on Alcoholism? What do they do?"

I said, "It's the health agency in the alcoholism field comparable to the Heart Association or the Cancer Society." He said, "Oh, that health stuff is ridiculous. It is just a matter of will power." He is one person I didn't pursue it with.

But most people are willing to hear about it, and my theory is that if you have somebody in your family who is an alcoholic or you had some involvement with alcoholics, you would like to know and understand that this is a health problem and that it is not a moral issue and it is not a matter of weak will.

The Twelve Steps: A Program for Living

Morris: I would like to talk a little about the Twelve Steps in AA. Do you want to start on this?

Pomeroy: Yes, let's start and talk about them a little bit because I think it fits here. The understanding of the Twelve Steps and the acceptance of the Twelve Steps is, in my belief certainly, a basic fundamental part of how one finds sobriety and then by working those steps, dealing with those steps, becomes able to live a life in which there is no need to drink. [See next page.]

The whole composite of the Twelve Steps is the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and this is so much more a program of how to live than it is a program of not drinking. It becomes very important to know and understand the Twelve Steps. You talk about the First Three steps--they group themselves, I think; the First Step in which you admit that you are powerless over alcohol, that one's life has become unmanageable.

I had probably been sober a year before I came to clearly understand that the unmanageability of my life did not come from the fact that I was powerless over alcohol, but that my use of alcohol to the point where I became powerless over it, came about because of the unmanageability of my life because, I had pretty much separated myself from the values with which I grew up. I had

THE TWELVE STEPS OF A A

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

quite lost the capacity to be honest, which is an integral value in one's life. I had lived for a long time on a basis of expediency. I said and did those things that got me what I wanted.

Morris: In relation to other things than drinking?

Pomeroy: Oh, in relation to my whole life and clearly two marriages which did not succeed. I take full responsibility for a fair share, if not more than fair share of that because of an inability to live by and with important values. [tape interruption] The work that was involved in coming to that understanding, and we're dealing now only with the first step, consisted of listening in a lot of meetings to a lot of people talk about their lives and how they moved toward their alcoholism and then how they moved out of it. I can still remember vividly a brilliant young man, a graduate of Notre Dame, who said, "I finally came to the conclusion that the reason that I drank was that I couldn't stand myself sober."

I thought, "Ah, that First Step. This is beginning to really mean something to me," because I didn't like myself. I didn't like myself at all by the time I ended up tucked away in a bottle of bourbon. So that first step represented a long period of reading, of talking with people, sitting in meetings listening to people, and then finally coming around to the point where I understood that I was going to have to make a lot of changes in my life in order to be comfortable with myself again, and I couldn't really remember when I had been totally comfortable with myself.

The Second Step is: "Coming to believe that a power greater than oneself can restore one to sanity." Many of us, I think, had an instant rebellion at the idea of being classified as insane, but one arrives at a point where it is rather comforting to believe that one indeed was insane when one was drinking. Otherwise, the things that one did, that one had to be held responsible for, were pretty awful. [phone rings] I guess we probably better cut this off for today. Again the process of understanding the Second Step and being able to come to believe that although one had been guilty of insane behavior one was free to behave without insanity if one was not drinking was a part of the sharing that is the essence of AA.

The Third Step, "Make a decision to turn one's will and one's life over to the care of God as you understand Him" became, in some ways a monumental hurdle. My separation from the Catholic church, by reason of divorce and remarriage, had isolated me from the God I'd grown up with. I was not on "speaking terms". This step was, for me, an abstraction whereas steps one and two dealt with the reality of alcoholism--powerlessness, and insanity. After many, many meetings of listening and hours of talking with older members

about the "how" of turning one's life and will over I was able to accept a suggestion that I just turn over some part of my life to "a power greater than myself"--and to believe that I would get help and guidance. I consciously identified the power of a group--an AA group--as being greater than one member of it (me)--and consciously said to myself I'm going to turn my drinking over to the group. Then I made a retreat with Father Dowling--and it was at that time that I was able to come to terms with my faith and belief in God and to find myself again comfortable in the Catholic church.

[Interview #7, June 22, 1982] ##

Steps Four and Five: Personal Inventory and Admitting One's Wrongs

Pomeroy: I think probably it is safe to say that that whole process, which incidentally was carried out over a period of a year and a half, two years, is the most difficult thing that I have ever done. If you have led the kind of a life that I led, which was always rising, everything that I touched from the time I finished law school, with the exception of failing the bar exam, everything else that I touched turned out well. Progress was reflected of a material kind; professionally, to the extent you can call it professional in those early days of administration; it all turned out well--the whole European experience; in terms of personal accomplishment--leaving out the disastrous result of a marriage which certainly had not turned out well but [about] which at that point in time I was able to be very self-pitying; I was the abused one, so I rationalized everything that happened in connection with that.

When it came to, first of all, admitting the total defeat that was involved in alcoholism, and then beginning the process of really taking myself apart in order to arrive at a point where I could start to build a new kind of life, that was extraordinarily difficult.

My final success, to the extent one has any reason to talk about success in doing the fourth step, the personal inventory, and then following that with the admitting to God, to myself, and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongs with this step, that all came together at a Catholic retreat with the Sisters of Cenadle at Sacramento at Carmichael. The retreat master was a man by the name of Father Edward Dowling from St. Louis, who had been the first Catholic priest to give his

endorsement to Alcoholics Anonymous. He was a friend of Bill Wilson. He had come out to the Cenadle in Sacramento to be the retreat master.

Morris: Had he already become supportive of AA at the time you went to that?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Morris: Was this a retreat for alcoholics?

Pomeroy: For alcoholics, yes, and I went to that retreat at the suggestion of Esther Harley, Truman's wife, because I was still going every week to a meeting at Mountain Vista Farm on Friday nights. About every three or four months I would go up and spend a weekend up there, just a pleasant weekend, for reinforcement.

Morris: Did you go to the retreat because you knew about Father Dowling?

Pomeroy: No, I did not know about Father Dowling. This was again serendipity. I had found very few priests up to that time that I felt had anything like this man's great warmth and sensitivity. He was the editor of a publication called The Queen's Work, which is a Catholic periodical.

As the result of my experience with him at this retreat, which involved taking with him that Fifth Step, sharing my inventory, I became so deeply almost dependent on him for some spiritual support and guidance that I made, I think, three trips to St. Louis to see him over a period of several years before he died. When he came out here, I was able to arrange my life so that I could be his chauffeur and be helpful to him in whatever he was doing out here. He was a very powerful influence for me.

Morris: Is that similar to the relation in and the support of the confessional?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, yes. I have no idea whether there is a disproportionate number of Roman Catholics in AA but one of the things that seems to make it possible for many Catholics who come to AA to accept and deal with the whole modus operandi is that built into the Catholic religion is the very basic act of confession and forgiveness. This is where you find the essence of AA as well, the admission and the forgiving of oneself. Of course, students and scholars have recognized that Alcoholics Anonymous in putting together the Twelve Steps has taken from a variety of religions and somehow compacted into a very simple program really the principles and the concepts that are a part of the world's great religions. Love thy neighbor as thyself.

Morris: Do unto others--

Pomeroy: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. One could take, if one were interested, I think, all twelve of those steps and you could paraphrase them into expressions that would stem from the great religions of the world that have presumably dominated people's spiritual lives one way or another. It continues, for me, to be a most remarkable institution that supplements and complements whatever else one is able to build into one's life in the way of spiritual base and spiritual form.

Morris: Was Father Dowling the kind of person who offered advice and suggestions or did he just listen and give you, in effect, absolution, for facing and dealing with the situation?

Pomeroy: I think he did some of both. He was very accepting and forgiving and that, for me, was an enormous contribution at that point in time. But he also was very clear that one had to bring about change in one's life if one expected to live comfortably and to operate on a different basis than the basis that had led one into alcoholism. He was very much a realist and he had great admiration and respect for Alcoholics Anonymous. He saw the institution of AA as something that offered to anyone, Catholic or non-Catholic, a pattern for living that was totally compatible with the Roman Catholic church.

Morris: He didn't see it as competition.

Pomeroy: Not at all. His endorsement of, his suggestions were, yes, go to meetings; yes, make your companionship with people who are sober and practicing the AA program; yes, return to the church of your childhood and see if you can find what you grew up with as a child. So, yes, he offered suggestions and advice.

A Power Greater than Oneself; Making Amends

Morris: It sounds as if, for you, the step of turning over your problems to God was indeed the Catholic God that you had grown up with rather than another spiritual manifestation.

Pomeroy: I came to that through the process of the retreat. The confession that was involved as a part of that retreat experience, and what had existed for me during the year and a half or so that I had been in AA before that retreat took place, had been an acceptance of the fact that there was a power greater than myself. But it

was a power of an AA group; it was not God as I had understood him as a younger person, because I had moved away from the belief that there was a loving God who cared about me.

I knew there was a God. I accepted the reality of a power outside myself, but it was something that I was not in touch with and had no relation with. But I began to have a very strong and clear relationship with the power that resided in a group of people. Together we were doing something that none of us had been able to do individually, and that was a very strong force for me in those first probably eighteen months.

Morris: In this year and a half period, did you succeed in making some changes in your thinking and in your own personal life patterns?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes; oh, yes, because the process of doing that inventory is one that probably started when I had been sober about six months and continued then in various forms for another year. It was only later that I was able to sit down and write down an inventory which in turn then I could discuss, first with Father Dowling. As a matter of fact, he was the only person that I ever felt the need to talk through that whole thing. That was done over a period of probably another year.

Morris: What about the Ninth Step about repairing the damage, making amends?

Pomeroy: That went on in small bits and pieces for a long time. The major amend that I felt I had to make was in connection with my mother. The fact that I was sober for nine months prior to her last illness meant that I had spent a Christmas with her doing exactly what she wanted to do, which was wonderful for me. Then I was able to go to Hollywood and be with her and actually took care of her through most of her last illness. She died knowing that I had been sober for nearly a year and that was the major amend in my life.

For many people, the harm that has been done is spread around among a lot of family members--wives, husbands, children, and so on. The only person that I felt had been truly, seriously hurt as the result of my drinking was my mother. Other people, friends, I had moved out of their lives. My drinking had not been a problem for them because I just disappeared in the last two years of my drinking, the years that were so destructive. So the making of amends to those people was accomplished by gradually re-establishing myself and proffering friendship again. If it was accepted, that was fine, and if it wasn't I felt that I had earned their disregard [laughs] and didn't suffer from it.

The other aspect of making amends--I will always have the feeling that it would have been wonderful if there had been a much longer period of time for me to have done things for Mother. I have done many things in her name that I feel (when I have an opportunity, particularly to do something for an older person) that it is in effect making amends to Mother.

Morris: That is kind of the St. Christopher idea that you receive from one person and then you give to another, which is a very powerful idea.

Pomeroy: Yes, yes.

Pattern for Personal Growth: Continued Contact with AA

Morris: Then you said there is a kind of a continuing personal inventory process and renewal of those ideas, a kind of personal growth in terms of relating to other people.

Pomeroy: I think it seems to function on two levels, Gaby. There is, as a part of the Tenth Step, continuing to take personal inventory, and when we're wrong, promptly admit it. That is a very powerful concept, a powerful principle, to guide one's relationships with people because for many of us and certainly for me during all of the early part of my life, the kind of arrogance that I developed within myself was such that I always knew I was right; and you didn't have any possibility of being right. Once I had made a pronouncement, there was no question about whether or not that was right, and I would go to great lengths to avoid getting into a situation where I might have to admit that it was wrong. So I became in my own mind fairly omniscient.

So this whole principle required coming to the conclusion that there is a possibility that something I have said or done was wrong, and that I do something about admitting it. One of the things that trying to build this principle into my life [Twelfth Step] has done for me is to make me far more open in going out and searching for facts and truth than just basing judgments on whatever my limited knowledge may have been at some time. I find myself now much more likely to say, "I think this is possible or it may be, but let's take a look at it," that kind of thing, which makes for, I'm convinced, a much better working relationship, particularly if you are in a supervisory job.

I had a staff at the United Community Fund of about a hundred people and I don't think that those people were all very accus-

tomed to having a director who was constantly involving them, and yet I am convinced out of that experience and my later experience with the council [Northern California Council on Alcoholism] that this great deal to do with success in administration.

Morris: Are there any other things that you would like to say about the experience of your own recovery before I ask you about re-entering the professional world?

Pomeroy: Yes--an observation about a continuing relationship with AA. Early on, we're urged, within the framework of AA, to continue our participation--attendance at meetings and so on--and the people who succeed in maintaining their sobriety in AA divide rather sharply into two groups, and I think I do not fit completely in either one of them. One group is absolutely committed to building all of their life activities around AA or around AA people. They go to AA meetings, they go to AA conventions, they go on trips with AA friends and so on, and their lives have been radically changed and altered by this experience.

The other group comes to AA and maintains sobriety and, at the end of two or three years, tend to not go to meetings. They may have a few AA friends that they keep in touch with and maybe once a year there will be attendance at some ceremonial thing such as an anniversary meeting or something like that. But they maintain their sobriety. They consider themselves members of AA and, most importantly, they practice the principles of the program in their lives.

I think what I have done is some of both, because I have built a very substantial life outside of AA, but I have maintained a link, a continuing, active link with the Fellowship. I have as close friends inside the Fellowship as I do outside. So to me, this is the thing to be very grateful for.

Then there is the one other thing that one, I think, can cherish, and that is there is almost nowhere in the world that I could ever be where I won't find some AA companionship or AA support, that might not necessarily have anything to do with drinking, but just the fact that there is friendship available through that channel.

Morris: And an immediate kinship on the basis of--

Pomeroy: Yes, we have shared something.

Morris: How many people roughly or on a percentage basis do what you have done and have in a sense become a spokesman for and active in developing both AA and--?

Pomeroy: And other aspects of dealing with alcoholism? A very small handful really. It starts with Marty Mann who became my very, very good friend and founded the National Council on Alcoholism.

XI FRIENDS OF BILL W; THE FELLOWSHIP OF AA

Group Discussion Recorded May 26, 1982. Participants: Roberta Meyer-Sheldon, William Sheldon, Blair Fuller, Florette Pomeroy, Gabrielle Morris [Interview 5]

Explanations

Pomeroy: I did tell you that this is part of the process of an oral history being done for The Bancroft Library. One of my great desires was to really do a very thorough job, if you like, talking about alcoholism and my own recovery and the movement back into the mainstream and so on.

I think to introduce anybody to AA just by a little conversation and an interview process was hardly going to be enough. So we have been to an AA meeting. She (Gabrielle Morris) has laid hands on the book, Alcoholics Anonymous. She has probably read by now Under the Influence or parts of it.

That has been what Gaby refers to as her in-service training [laughter], which I love, to equip herself. I suggested that perhaps four of us spending an hour or two talking about AA and responding to some of Gaby's questions about it might make for a better understanding of it, and also, I think, can help me a good deal. We may end up asking your permission to include part of it in the transcript to elaborate somewhat.*

Morris: Were you aware of AA in Europe when you were there in the 1950s, Florette?

*After reviewing the transcript of this chapter, Roberta, William, and Blair each agreed to its inclusion in Mrs. Pomeroy's memoir.

Pomeroy: In 1961, Marty Mann had been to France for the International Committee and so on. They were apparently becoming knowledgeable. Now, of course, there is a good deal of activity in all of the European countries. I didn't know anything about AA when I lived in Europe.

Morris: But it still primarily operates in the United States?

Pomeroy: It's all over the world.

Blair: I was in Mexico the winter before last. It's not anonymous in Mexico, or not anyway as we think of it. There are big signs on the doors in these little towns saying "Alcoholics Anonymous meets here Wednesday nights" and so on.

Roberta: Along with Lions Club and the Elks Club! [laughs]

Blair: Yes, it's advertised; it's right out there.

Morris: Now, why does it work that way in Mexico and not in the United States?

Blair: I really can't answer the question and that is because there isn't any central direction of the whole thing.

Morris: In the United States?

Pomeroy: Or anywhere.

Morris: So anybody is free to do what they wish.

Blair: Really, Florette, you should answer that, not me, because you have been more involved with how the organization per se works than I have.

Pomeroy: There are a set of traditions, the twelve traditions, which impose or suggest certain requirements particularly with respect to the representation of the fellowship of AA, that no one speaks for it, that individual members can speak about it as it relates to each person.

There is a central office of AA in New York. There is a general service conference. There is representation from AA groups around the country participating in the activities at the central national level, but the tradition of anonymity is really the only one that is, with some vigor, attacked if one breaks that anonymity.

Tradition of Anonymity

Pomeroy: You don't hear anything about it, but if I were to go out tomorrow and have an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle, and proclaim myself to be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous for the last twenty-seven years and eleven months and three days, and talk at length about AA, and as a member have given my full name and said who I am and so on, I would have broken the tradition of anonymity.

Blair: It would have created quite a reaction.

Roberta: Oh, you'll get phone calls and letters and everything else.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, there would be a real furor. Lillian Roth, the actress, sobered up in AA and proceeded to write a book called I'll Cry Tomorrow.^{*} In that book she indeed broke her anonymity. She told that her recovery took place in AA. I guess there is still fairly good reason for the anonymity because what happened to Lillian Roth, unfortunately, is what has happened occasionally, and that is Lillian Roth drank again, she died drinking. The feeling that the people who developed the traditions had was that it really is a protection for the fellowship of AA to not have people identify themselves publicly as members of AA. That is not the reason that it originally was that way. The reason it was originally that way was because nobody was willing to admit that they were alcoholic and had a problem.

Morris: Because of the community prejudices?

Bill: Because of the stigma attached; you couldn't get a job and would only seek the help that is offered in AA if you had some assurance that the fact that you were there would not be disclosed.

Morris: Yet in both of the books that I have been reading there are numerous case histories about people who had recovered who were newspaper publishers and business executives and things like that who would come out of the front office and come take the person by the hand and say, "Now, let us sit down and talk about this." To me that indicated a fair amount of visibility, at least in the situation in which those individual people who had recovered were functioning.

^{*}Frederick Fell, Inc., New York, 1954.

Pomeroy: I think that visibility is increasing all of the time. Sitting around the table are four people who for years have had no reservation whatever, whenever there is a reason, where it may help someone. Blair has had an article published in the paper in which he did not break his anonymity as a member of AA, but he dealt with the fact that he had had alcoholism treatment.

Blair: Yes, that's right. It's rather tricky doing this and it's something you brood about if you try to write about it.

Roberta: I think that's an important point. I have a number of times, say, had articles written or have been on television and have disclosed that I am an alcoholic. There is nothing in the traditions that says you can't reveal that you are a recovering alcoholic or practicing alcoholic if you want.

Pomeroy: Preferably not! [laughter]

Roberta: Preferably not, but even so I have received phone calls and letters from people who are in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous who felt that I had done something wrong because they weren't clear about the tradition. So they would say, "You shouldn't be on television saying you are an alcoholic." Well, that is not the tradition. Also, in reading some of Bill W.'s writings,* apparently also one of the motivating factors was that Alcoholics Anonymous, after the Jack Alexander article, became a kind of incredible organization and people were saying, "What is this phenomenal organization?"

So people in the fellowship were going out and using it as a way in. They were using it as "well, I'm a member of this"--

Morris: Exploiting it for business--?

Roberta: Exactly, for business or for self aggrandizement or however you say it. In some of Bill's talking about himself, he revealed that his ego began to apparently swell as the result of the recognition he was getting. And knowing that the return of the ego in that form, could be and often is deadly to alcoholics, he emphasized the importance of personal anonymity.

*Shorthand for Bill Wilson

This is my interpretation--of course, everything I say is my opinion, my interpretation--Bill felt that there was a danger not only to his own sobriety, but to the sobriety of others if they used Alcoholics Anonymous in an inappropriate manner for their own self--the word aggrandizement is the only word that comes to mind.

So that another one of the elements involved in that tradition was to protect the fellowship, to protect the individual from letting their ego get out of hand, and then also the--not only do we not reveal to others that we are members of the fellowship, but I would not say to someone else that Florette is a member of the fellowship.

But if I meet someone, like we had a party on Sunday, I had some friends from Marin and friends in San Francisco. They did not know each other, so I said, "You are both friends of Bill Wilson's." Then they know what that means.

Morris: It's a kind of shorthand.

Roberta: Yes, it's a way of saying in front of other people, who are not members of the fellowship, now, these people know that they are. But I have not broken anybody's anonymity, and the individual can, if they choose, then say to someone, "I am an alcoholic" or "I'm in AA."

Morris: It is at a one-to-one communication, "Can we be friends, can we be of support to each other?"

Roberta: Yes, and also I have many friends who are not in AA and they all know I am an alcoholic and they all know I am in AA. That's fine--but not for me to go on television and to say I am in AA. But I can go on television and say I am an alcoholic. I think these distinctions are important.

Morris: That raises an interesting question. Is there going to be a concern in to the fellowship in doing this kind of a documentation that we are talking about?

Pomeroy: My sense is not, and the basis for saying that is Tom Pike's personal biography in which he has dealt at length with the subject of his membership in AA.* This is not at the level of press, radio, and television.

Blair: No, I would say not.

*Memoirs of Thomas P. Pike, 1979, privately printed.

Roberta: Also, everybody knows Bill Wilson, everybody knows who he is. It's a different thing.

Pomeroy: The reason that I made clear to Roberta and Blair and Bill what we are doing this for in case they had any reservation about being a part of a document.

But, no, at this level and at the level of the one-to-one communication, I for years now have said to almost everyone that I know, certainly anybody who asks me, I have said, "You are perfectly free if you have a friend who is in difficulty with alcohol, you are very free to use my name, you are free to say that I am a recovered alcoholic, you are free to say that I am a member of AA, and that I would be delighted to talk to them." And this goes on. I am sure all of you do the same thing.

Blair: True.

Roberta: Sure we do.

Numbers and Structures

Morris: It is really interesting to hear this discussion of anonymity because it sounds as if the numbers of alcoholics are sizable and most of them are not in contact with AA. Is that a reasonable--?

Pomeroy: Probably at this point among the ten million alcoholics in the United States ten percent, a million or more, are members of AA, active members of AA, and in recovery.

Bill: And how many do you suppose in recovery who are not active in AA?

Pomeroy: I think we probably have a very substantial group by now.

Roberta: I think so.

Pomeroy: I remember people I have known who came and spent a year, two years, active in an AA group and then went about their business. Every once in a while one sees some of them, and they have not returned to drinking. There is no way of guessing, but if I were making a guess, I wouldn't be surprised if there were at least another half million people who have gained sobriety as the result of their membership in AA and are functioning members of society today, although not active in the fellowship.

Blair: I think, of course, there are many new programs offered--Careunit and this kind of program--which a few years ago just simply didn't exist. How many people those programs are treating. I just have no idea. I don't know how you would find out.

Pomeroy: I don't think there is any way to find out.

Roberta: There is so much crossover. Even the Careunits--

Blair: One thing about anonymity, which is kind of minor but interesting. AA is a corporate body (in New York City, I suppose) and its officers--I think this is still true, it used to be--were not in the fellowship because they had to be public names. [laughter]

Pomeroy: The first members of the general service board were non-members of AA.

Roberta: I love it! I had forgotten that completely.

Morris: How were they chosen?

Blair: I don't know.

Pomeroy: There is a very, very loose, informal apparatus that results ultimately in people serving on boards and committees at first the local level and then a regional level, there is an area level, and then ultimately, a few of them get nominated to serve on the general service board, the national board.

Now, of course, the board is entirely members of AA, the board at this point is entirely recovered alcoholics, all of whom use their first and last names. But initially, Blair is quite correct. One of the people who was on that early board, and I sat next to him one time at an AA banquet in New York, it was very, very amusing, was Archibald Roosevelt. He just died, but he was a long time member of that first-board. So was Dr. Norris from Eastman Kodak.

Morris: These were non--

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, these were non-alcoholics. These were what we are pleased to call "civilians." [laughs]

Bill: Were they grateful family members?

Pomeroy: No, no. Kodak was one of the early corporate programs, and Norris was quite responsible for it. He had met Bill Wilson through the doctor at the hospital in New York.

Morris: Silkworth?

Pomeroy: Through Silkworth. As Bill's sobriety stabilized and Dr. Norris got to know him, he became interested in the possibility of doing something about alcoholism among the employees at Kodak and became a great friend of AA's.

Morris: A separate program not necessarily based on AA?

Pomeroy: Oh, a separate program entirely. Many of the programs in companies, of which there are now about five hundred around the country, utilize referrals to AA in order to facilitate the recovery of the individual, but they are operated quite separately as a part of the medical department or a part of the personnel department. It depends on the company how it's done. There is one new meeting in San Francisco at Levi Strauss down in the Plaza, which is quite unusual. The meeting is publicized in the main lobby of the Levi Strauss headquarters where it is listed as "Friends of Bill W." There are very few companies where there are sponsored meetings within the company.

Morris: In other words, an AA unit that is functioning now within--?

Pomeroy: It's an AA meeting that meets once a week and Levi Strauss has provided the room and encouraged the development of it through their employee assistance program. But theoretically it is completely separate.

Roberta: They just support it, that's all, support it in the sense of giving them a room.

Morris: Are the people in the program all employees of Levi Strauss?

Blair: I believe so. They wouldn't have to be.

Pomeroy: They don't have to be. As a matter of fact, there are a number of non-Levi Strauss people who attend.

Blair: I thought of going myself, but I haven't.

Roberta: Anybody could go, because all AA meetings are open to all alcoholics.

Commonality of Experience

Morris: Could we talk a little bit about the differences in different kinds of groups? It seems such a central part of the AA experience. I am curious as to how much they vary.

Pomeroy: Go ahead and start.

Roberta: It seems like there are three basic forms. There may be variations on those forms--that's how I see it. Most meetings last one hour. One format would be the speaker meeting. A speaker meeting is when one person tells their story and out of the hour they may talk forty to fifty minutes simply sharing their experience.

Then there is the discussion kind. That is were there will be the chairman who will either think of a topic or encourage the group to suggest a topic and then there will be a general discussion. There are different forms that the discussion meetings take. Sometimes it will be what is called a book group and they'll go through the chapters of the book or phrases in the book or something like that and it's an ongoing process of exploring the big book [Alcoholics Anonymous]. Sometimes there will be a series of emotions that will be discussed. I mean each group can hit however they want to and sometimes it's just open--whatever is on anybody's mind.

A variation on those would be the speaker-discussion meeting where half of it is speaker and then the rest of it is discussion.

Then the third major type doesn't exist a lot in the Bay Area to my knowledge, which is participation. But from San Jose south (I know, and I don't know much about the rest of the country) it's a very popular form, which is where a number of people at the meeting will be called upon to speak. It is not really a discussion. They will be called up in front of the room, and they will talk for five minutes, maybe ten minutes, and then another one will come up. So that is called participation.

Now, that is my idea. Are there other major forms? I know there are variations on that.

Bill: Within that there are sub-species, groups that have a particular interest. For instance, a young people's group. Roberta and I were involved in the formation of the young people's group here in San Francisco.

Roberta: A few years ago.

Blair: There are also groups that study the steps, for example.

Roberta: Yes, study groups.

Blair: But I think that mainly what hasn't been said is that there are many groups which are birds-of-a-feather groups--gay groups, Hispanics, blacks, Spanish language, women, non-smokers. You think of some more categories--every language--

Morris: Have you been to enough different kinds of those to get a sense of whether the people in that kind of an affinity group may have different kinds of concerns or difficulties with dealing with their alcoholism than people in other kinds of groups?

Bill: Oh, yes, sure. The Montgomery Street's groups are really different from more blue collar groups, which are different from Telegraph Hill groups.

Morris: In the way they deal with each other or in the way they verbalize the experience--?

Bill: In the experience they have to recount. Now, maybe you could say, well, it all comes to the same thing in the end. But really the experience they have to recount is different, and that's why people do, in fact, flock to their own groups.

Roberta: It's one more common bond.

Bill: Yes, it's commonality. It's really more supportive, I think, to explore the things that did go on with us in our own experience of our alcoholism. I know it is so for me if I am in a group of people who seem to understand that my experience of it is more nearly associated with theirs.

Morris: And the rest of their experience is similar to yours?

Bill: It may or may not be, but there is that common bond. Within that though, people will have a wide, wide range of experience. In the young people's group, some of the things that come up are peculiar just to young people and yet a lot of it is what you would hear in any meeting. It's almost like it's easier for them to share and to look at if it's done in the framework of something that seems hospitable and friendly and accepting to them.

Roberta: I have never talked with you, Florette, about this, but I know when I came into the fellowship, which was about eighteen years ago, I was suprised that any women got sober--when I look back on it. At the time, it didn't surprise me because I just wanted to get sober.

The first time I ever saw Florette was at a women's meeting. When I came into the fellowship, I was twenty-seven years old, which was very young at that time; I was single. I went to the women's meeting because, quite honestly, it was really a confrontation for me to come into these meetings and to be faced with what is commonly called the Thirteenth Step, which is where a member of the opposite sex sees you and kind of is going to take you under their wing. When I look back on it, I am kind of surprised that a lot of women ever made it, because then not only was there that, there was also the implication that the people at the meeting had drunk more than I had spilled. There wasn't the implication; that was said to me repeatedly.

Morris: You can't be a real alcoholic because you haven't drunk enough?

Roberta: I spoke at a meeting and a woman sat in the back of the room that I had seen in different meetings, and when the meeting was over, she said, "Roberta, I am glad to hear you speak. I thought you were a real phony. I never thought you were really an alcoholic until I heard you speak today." So I can see how these groups formed, because I can imagine the first few gay people coming in and being treated--

Pomeroy: Oh, incredibly uncomfortable.

Roberta: Yes, and all of that has happened certainly since I came into the fellowship. And, of course, you have seen incredible things. But there was one women's group, Stepping Stone--but, no, that was even later.

Pomeroy: That's later.

Roberta: It was at the Alano Club. I used to go there just because it was the one meeting where I--

Pomeroy: Felt comfortable, felt secure.

Roberta: Yes.

Pomeroy: The same thing was true--the first black group in San Francisco developed as the result of a man by the name of Hannibal. He sobered up out of an incredible career. He was an activist in the Western Addition who drove Justin Herman, the director of redevelopment, absolutely up the wall! [laughter] Hannibal is an incredible human being! He had organized the Western Addition to

make life miserable for the Redevelopment Agency. If you visualize, those of us who had the experience of watching the aberrational drunken behavior, this man was a thorough, complete alcoholic, there was no question about that. He had been in jail across the country, he had everything happen to him.

Finally, he sobered up in AA, went to an all-white group because he couldn't find anything else. Ultimately this man went to divinity school. He has become a minister and he has become a really quite powerful influence in the community one way and another.

But the most useful thing he did was to take a look around and say, "We've got to have some groups where blacks will feel comfortable. He went out and he got a room, and he rounded up two or three sober black members and said, "Come on, we're going to start a black group." It didn't mean that whites weren't welcome, but, boy, he wanted to make sure there were always more blacks than whites in that room.

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Blair: Sometimes a black turns up at the Telegraph Hill meeting; usually not.

Pomeroy: One turns up in Sausalito, once in a while, but not very often.

Blair: No, and fewer Hispanics have been my experience.

Pomeroy: Yes: now there are Spanish-speaking natives in the Mission and that's where you will find most of the Hispanics.

Morris: But there were enough black people in the various groups around that time that Hannibal could bring them together?

Pomeroy: There weren't very many. He probably had a little band of three or four people.

Roberta: That's all it takes.

Pomeroy: But then the meeting that you went to in Sausalito started with two or three people--four people--and a coffee pot.

I heard a figure today. There are 265 AA meetings in San Francisco every week.

Roberta: That's fantastic.

Bill: That's almost double what it was.

Blair: That's quite stunning. I mean, I used to have that little calendar book.

Pomeroy: That's the figure that was provided by Jackie Tolliver at the Council when she was getting some information together for the mayor for speaking at the Alcoholism Council of California meeting.

Blair: There is a very good little book published by the county fellowship, which tells you there is going to be a meeting in such-and-such a place at such-and-such a time. So if one meeting gets too crowded, people--I don't know quite why I have never done it myself--start a new meeting, and that's all the publicity that you want and that you are going to get; get yourself listed, I mean.

Then you send out a little announcement to other meetings, so there is an announcement, there is a new meeting.

Roberta: Then you tell your friends.

Blair: That's it; I mean you don't tack anything on the wall.

Pomeroy: No, you put it in a newsletter.

For People Who Want It: Independence and Networking

Morris: Now, that is kind of support for people who have made a recovery and are working their way through the steps. What about contacts with people who are still struggling with alcohol?

Blair: The policy of AA is that we work by attraction; that is, we don't go out and proselytize. We look so absolutely terrific that people are attracted to the program. That's the--

Morris: It's very appealing. Coming home from Florette's meeting I felt very warmed by the experience.

Bill: The phrase I like is that AA is for people who want it, not for people who need it. There are a lot of people we see who need it, so to speak, and yet for the most part it works only when people are ready to have it work.

For the most part, it is personal contacts, I think, like a lot of people call Florette and I'm sure they call Blair.

Otherwise people call into the AA central office, they will be put in contact with a member of AA. I guess they still have the requirement that it has to be the person asking for help for themselves for the most part--not an irate wife saying, "Send somebody over to get this drunk out of the house!"

Roberta: Those calls come in!

Bill: Yes, they do come in, but we don't respond to those.

So in those, certainly, we're not involved with the anonymity of AA, because it is done at a personal level. Often the overture is made to take that person to a meeting, what we call in the fellowship "Twelve-Stepping", which is where we share our experience with somebody else and make it available to them and often go by, pick them up, drive them to a meeting, be with them during a meeting, introduce them to people, just to lower the shock element as much as possible.

Morris: I would think that for somebody in really bad shape it would be very difficult to take that step. I'm looking at it from my own experience with a couple of members of my family and close friends who were in really bad shape who had some contact with AA, but were not prepared to follow up.

Bill: Yes, that is the toughest. People can be in that very situation for a long time.

Roberta: I think it's important, again, to look and see what has happened. I see these incredible changes over the years. AA does not affiliate or align with any other organization, but I also see AA finally becoming part of a network, and I think that is really important. AA is for those who want it, but we individually can play a part in letting people come to the realization that they do want it. Part of the network, of course, would be the spouses, children, the family groups, where the individuals take responsibility for themselves, not for the alcoholic, through learning changed behavior, changed modes of communication. All of that is in fact participating in the alcoholic coming to the realization that they in fact do want it--not by focussing on the alcoholic, but by focussing on their own process, which changes the whole family dynamic, for example, or with friends even.

I think, finally, with professionals outside of AA, with people in the Careunits, the National Council on Alcoholism, all of this--NCA went out last week and did Walk Aware and just marched all over the city with little things and hung them on people's doors. They said, "Do you have an alcoholic in the family?" It wasn't quite in those words.

I remember Paul Gardner years ago saying, "I wish we could just go up to everybody's door and say, "Got an alcoholic in the family?" But it couldn't be done. Now with NCA as a separate organization, AA now can be networked with that. Somebody will pick that thing up, call NCA, NCA will then refer them to AA, so there is a whole system that exists now, which is very exciting. So we don't have to sit around and wait for people to fall into the gutter. We do have the means. There are treatments that are being developed where people are learning intervention systems and techniques which make it possible for the alcoholic to see earlier what in fact is truly happening.

I look in my own life and those of us in AA with kids--I see our kids. We have one child who has stopped drinking. We have another child at the age of twenty-two who has quit: "I really think I better take a look at this." They are young. They grow up with it, they see it. if I sound excited about it, it's because I am. I see networking this whole thing as really important.

Distrust of Professionals

Roberta: For years, the professionals, so to speak, were over here, the members of AA were over there. There is still some of that. There may be even a lot of it, but from where it was ten years ago--

Blair: There is a big difference.

Roberta: It's incredible.

Pomeroy: Oh, that's changed, yes.

Morris: Could we talk a little bit about that? Reading Under the Influence it struck me that the author was working from a medical model and toward the end he says AA should do this, that, and the other thing. I wondered about the nature of this conflict between the--

Pomeroy: I think that the experience that all of the early members of AA had was that in no way had the clergy, the medical profession, social workers, lawyers--no one--had helped them because they didn't understand anything about alcoholism. They couldn't help them. They tried to do things to them and didn't know what to do with them! [laughter] So that created--

Blair: I was just thinking of the doctors who think alcoholism is a vitamin deficiency! [more laughter]

Pomeroy: We still have a high percentage of them.

Morris: Is that because replacing vitamins for some people has worked in terms of alcohol?

Roberta: Or the ones who prescribe valium!

Pomeroy: Vitamin deficiency is a different thing, and that one can be dealt with, but the valium question is whether the doctor uses the valium to get the person out of his office and hopefully stop drinking. Then as soon as the patient has to be taken off valium, they return to drinking. It's a nice circle.

But the distrust on the part of people who were recovering alcoholics, and this goes right back into the origins of AA really, was so strong that once an expanding group of people began to recover in AA, it wasn't difficult for them to say, "AA is the only way. The doctors can't do anything, the clergymen don't do anything. There is nothing; AA is the only thing that works."

This kind of distrust of what the professional people had done permeated a fairly wide segment of the fellowship. Bill Wilson, before his death, really devoted a lot of time and energy to trying to explain that these people can be our friends, they want to be our friends, and let's help them understand and not just close the door to them.

So there is a changing pattern, and I've certainly seen it. The doctors that I had anything to do with when I was in the last stages of drinking were really quite awful, the psychiatrist and the internist who helpfully provided me with an unlimited amount of--at that time it was not valium. It was much stronger sleeping pills.

Bill: Nembutal?

Pomeroy: Nembutal and phenobarbital.

Roberta: Oh, good, barbiturates, how nice!

Pomeroy: Yes, the barbiturates, and there was one friendly doctor who got me five hundred half-grain barbiturates--phenobarbs--at a time.

Roberta: We're very lucky to know you! [laughs]

Pomeroy: I'm very lucky to still be around!

Roberta: You really are, good heavens.

Pomeroy: Yes, because you combine those with alcohol and you're in trouble.

Blair: My father was an alcoholic and essentially died of alcoholism and related causes. When he was in a very bad condition, I went to his doctor, whom I had known a long time. I made an appointment and I walked into his office and he said, "I know why you're here. Your father is killing himself." I said, "That's right."

Morris: And "What are you going to do about it?"

Blair: That was sort of it. He just threw up his hands.

Pomeroy: Had no suggestion.

Improvements in Medical Care

Blair: Also, a footnote to the network idea. These detox centers you see are relatively new in this city and elsewhere. Those doctors, or at least many of them--I don't know, you can't count them--but many of them are sympathetic. Of course, that's a great thing if you are Twelfth-Stepping. Actually, I have never done it, have never taken somebody to a detox center. But that's a situation which is--well, that's terrific, because otherwise you will be stuck with somebody who is very drunk and so on and so on. You really have a place to take them and say, "You can go in here and be put to bed."

Morris: Are they just for alcohol or are they also for barbiturates and heroin?

Bill: Generally separate.

Blair: I think it depends. Of course, San Francisco General has a ward over here, for drugs and one for alcohol here, or did a few years ago. I don't know about the detox centers.

Pomeroy: Detox is primarily for alcoholics. The detox centers developed in the beginning as an answer to starting an alcoholic toward sobriety. They have recognized now that they have to deal with the dual addictions because so many, particularly the younger people, are using various kinds of drugs as well as alcohol.

Morris: Deliberately?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, as part of their plan for living--better living through chemistry! [laughter]

Morris: How do the current detox centers differ from the kind of medical care that some of those early case histories in, Alcoholics Anonymous talk about?

Pomeroy: The philosophy about detoxification that has developed in the last fifteen years (because that's when Bob O'Brian set up the first detox unit here in San Francisco) was to provide a setting in which a minimum amount of medical treatment would be involved. And, indeed, the only medical treatment was to insure that anyone who might have complications would be monitored and there would be a back-up hospital facility. But the detox center itself was a quiet, nonthreatening place staffed primarily by recovered alcoholics, with a nurse in charge to monitor these possible complications.

Morris: As in convulsions and hallucinations?

Pomeroy: Yes, if they are faced with somebody who shows any sign of going into convulsions, they would want to get them into a hospital. But the history of the detox centers that we knew quite a bit about here was that only about three people out of a hundred required hospitalization. For the rest of the people, [it was] a quiet, nonthreatening place where somebody would talk to them, keep the fruit juice flowing into them, and keep them quiet. Most of them would have some very quiet music to help soothe the savage spirit and use no medication. The reason they used no medication is because they wanted to avoid the possibility that [after] three or four days of medication, you take the person off the medication, the first thing they do is look for a drink.

They use the detox center as a place in which the counselors, who in the main are recovered alcoholics themselves, would as soon as the person could be talked to sensibly at all, begin to try to work with that individual to provide them with some options and some alternatives as to what they could do, a treatment facility of some kind, start to go to AA, maybe arrange to have them taken to AA meetings while they are still in the detox centers. But it is to provide the safe place for a person to withdraw from alcohol.

Blair: Of course, some people are just in terrible physical shape. I mean they really need to be put into a bed and cleaned up.

Morris: Yes, and get food into them and things like that.

- Blair: Yes. I know a doctor, Gordon Sullivan, who used to be at a detox unit. He felt that for a lot of people that initial shock has a really beneficial effect.
- Pomeroy: Oh, I think there is no question.
- Blair: It's like going to jail for the first time. That makes a lasting impression.
- Morris: You mean being in a detox ward?
- Blair: Yes, "here I am in a detox."
- Bill: Without benefit of drugs. In other words--
- Morris: That certified that you are in a serious condition?
- Bill: Yes, really, that's a serious moment: "My, god, here I am and what have I come to."
- Pomeroy: Yes, "I've weathered all of these drunks, but now I find myself in a detox center." That's kind of the end.

Confronting One's Experience

- Pomeroy: Exactly the same thing happens to a good many people when, as the result of drinking, their behavior gets them in jail. There are plenty of people around who only had to end up in jail once as the result of drinking before they were sent scurrying to AA.
- Blair: Yes, or confronted by the boss.
- Morris: Does that work?
- Blair: Yes: "Look, cut it or you're out." Or confronted by a family member.
- Morris: I'm more familiar with the person did not listen to the boss and got fired and then disappeared from the scene.
- Blair: Oh, that is more frequent perhaps.
- Bill: Yes.

Roberta: But that's where the networking, that's where the system has to come in. If the boss just says, "Look, shape up or ship out," what use is that? The employee assistance program is the kind of thing where, look, first of all, it is not done for your drinking. It is done for your work performance.

If you confront me about my drinking, that could be a very shattering thing, but also all of my denial mechanisms come into play, which is part of my illness. So you have in fact played right straight into my illness. But if you talk about my job performance and very specifically and descriptively outline what is not working, now I am confronted with the facts. Now I am confronted with something very concrete.

If at the same time, you can say to me, "Look, I need to see improvement in one week or two weeks and if I don't, then we're going to have to take a look at this again. If you can present to me an option, if there is something going on in your life, if you want some assistance, we have an employee assistance program."

To just simply say to somebody, "That's it," that compounds my defense mechanisms. But if there is a concrete way in which I can be confronted and I can see the picture and I can't get away from my experience, I think that is the key. That is the thing when Bill was saying that to go to a detox where there is no drug given you--because if you go and you are given your valium and this and that and you have a nice stay in the hospital and big deal.

Morris: And you are looked after.

Roberta: Yes, and you are protected from your own feelings. But if you do not have that drug or any drugs, you have got to experience it, and that is the key. That is the key to intervention.

Betty Ford, I went to hear her in L.A. She was so wonderful. She talked about her doctor telling her that she was having a problem with chemical dependence and she dismissed him--I mean literally. Except that this doctor came back with two other doctors instead of being dismissed appropriately. He came back with two other doctors and all of the members of her family who had been rehearsed and trained in how to confront the woman with their experience, and there she was left with nothing but facing their experience. What her daughter-and-law said to her, "I don't want to leave children with you any more," was the final blow.

But then the family can't walk out of the room and say, "Now, do something about it, toots." That is the point at which they come in with--"and your bags are packed and we have a reservation for you at this luxury hotel in Long Beach!" [laughter]

Pomeroy: Otherwise known as a navy treatment unit!

Roberta: On a very small scale, this is what Bill did with my uncle. He just sat down with him and he said, "Look, I see the bump on your head." Bob said, "I fell down," or something. Bill said, "You did not. We know what is going on." He had the AA meeting booklet and the whole thing and he gave him a choice, and Uncle Bob, at the age of sixty-seven went to his first AA meeting and had seven years of sobriety until he died of lung cancer. So it's the experience. It's bringing someone--

Morris: That is the thing that is talked about in all of the things that I've read: the person who has been through it themselves, making it something that a person can confront.

Bill: Yes, and also to have the one who is drinking experience the consequences of the drinking. I am thinking of our friend who used to pass out at home and when he woke up, he'd be in a private room in a hospital with his silk sheets and people waiting on him and flowers and breakfast served in bed. He never got that it was a problem until the family finally had it pounded in their heads the thing to do was to leave him lying under the coffeetable in the living room in his own vomit and let him wake up in the morning and experience that. Then he got the message. He said, "Oh, that's what it's doing to me." He never had had that experience before.

Roberta: They are learning that it doesn't have to be another alcoholic that confronts. We thought that for a long time. We now know that we can train people in communication skills so that they can be the one who carries the message, not of AA, but the message of the experience rather than coming from the judgmental viewpoint that we used to, kind of pointing the finger--"You're an alcoholic, you've got a problem, you've got to do something."

They stay with their own experience. They say, "This is what I see, this is what I observe. This is what my experience is. You hear that from the four of us, none of us alcoholics--but you here what our experience is relative to you. It's like wow--

So incredible things are happening in the whole process that then can bring the person to AA much, much sooner. We didn't know those things before.

Blair: Yes, that is a real innovation, I think, this confrontation. It's become more common. I have no idea how common.

Pomeroy: It is spreading around the country. Probably the first well-defined program that embraced an intervention program as the essential approach to dealing with the alcoholic was the one that was developed at the Johnson Institute in Minneapolis, about which a film has been made and a book has been written. There are now a number of other programs that are built around that same concept, and they all deal with the process of bring the drinking alcoholic to a clear realization, facing the reality of what his or her drinking is doing both to himself and to the people around him. It is in contradistinction to what has happened and continues to happen to many people when they are totally protected.

I was protected by a good secretary and by colleagues in my office for months when I should have been dropped on my head!
[laughter]

Roberta: But nobody knew differently.

Pomeroy: Nobody knew differently and they went to great lengths. The lies that were told were legion.

Roberta: And they were all for your benefit as far as they knew.

Pomeroy: They were being my dearest friends.

Morris: Does this have a parallel in the kind of a person who lives a sort of protected life anyhow, their parents have made their decisions for them and they have gone from one protected situation to another?

Blair: I don't think so.

Pomeroy: No, not particularly; the kind of protection--alcoholics are charming people [laughter], this you must recognize, and they mesmerize a lot of the people that are associated with them--charm them right out of their shoes!

I can still remember this marvelous secretary I had when I worked for the federal government who used to come--when she finally could find me and she'd see me, she would say, "Mrs. Pomeroy, I would do anything in the world to keep you from getting in trouble." I would say, "You're a darling!" [laughter]

Blair: A perfect secretary for you!

Pomeroy: Absolutely, she was wonderful.

Blair: I still remember one of those movies that you used to show to the DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) class. It was the thing about the wife calling up and making excuses for the husband who was too hung over to get to work. As long as she would make up the excuses and, at the other end, the people in the company would buy the excuses, everybody knowing what the truth is but no one admitting it. That denies the alcoholic from seeing the truth of it. So nothing ever happened until the day she picks up the phone and says, "Hey, Joe is too hung over to come into work today." Then all of a sudden, he now has to deal with the reality of it.

Morris: The wife has to admit that her husband is hung over.

Blair: Oh, yes. See, the natural thing to do is to protect them because of the stigma attached to it. "Let's say it's the flu," and they'll hope it is and deny that it isn't. Every company has always had an alcoholism problem.

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Blair: --The companies and industry and getting them to see that they can't deal with it as a behavioral thing in terms of dealing with the individual's alcoholism. It doesn't work to go tell him he is an alcoholic and to shape up or ship out. All right, so what does work? That's where organizations like NCA have just made such incredible progress, and in people, too, being willing to share their alcoholism and to work towards getting rid of the stigma, which I still see as the major issue for people to confront.

Morris: So the stigma still exists in spite of the advances that have been made in--?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Blair: There still is a stigma. I'd like to add something about the anonymity thing. There is a stigma and, of course, that was why the anonymity was originally there.

But I really believe in anonymity. I think it is very important. You can see in the program, some people, their egos get fed, people who speak all of the time and so on. I think that gives you a clue that if this wasn't anonymous, it would become something dominated by certain people wanting recognition. It would become a much more common kind of organization. It would become a permanent leadership rather than meetings electing their secretaries and so on.

Pomeroy: Exactly.

- Blair: I think it is a very important thing, this anonymity.
- Morris: How does that work? My sense is that people who have come through and are still involved in AA have been instrumental in things like the NCA and the various state and federal legislation.
- Blair: Oh, sure. Oh, you bet, and thank God for leaders. It isn't that. But if it's not anonymous, then somebody is going to be the spokesman, somebody is going to get up there and say, "Let me tell you all about it."
- Morris: Other human characteristics are going to--
- Bill: Yes.
- Blair: Yes, publicly, and that would have real consequences. That will change structure and organization and so forth.
- Morris: This sounds like it might relate to some of the things I have read which suggest that there was some real effort to [quote] "get the psychiatrists out of control of things," that there have been some real problems in trying to gain acceptance for the AA view of things as the public programs became developed.
- Blair: I think there have been quite a lot of conflicts, but I am sure Florette knows more about it than me really.
- Morris: I was asking about the role of people in AA in some of the legislation that has come along and the development of public programming.
- Pomeroy: AA per se has not carried the banner for legislation. Members of AA functioning as members of the National Council on Alcoholism, functioning as individuals, identifying themselves as recovered alcoholics but not as members of AA, have been very influential with respect to legislation.

People like Harold Hughes, who had been the governor of Iowa and who was elected to the U.S. Senate, was responsible for the introduction of the legislation that was the first time in 1969 that the federal government said, "Alcoholism is a disease and is to be dealt with as a health problem," and set up the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, which only--1969, that's thirteen years ago.

Harold gave great credit to the volunteers around the country, but never were their volunteer efforts carried out in the name of AA. They were carried out very often in the name of the National Council, and the National Council chapters around the

country had substantial membership from among the members of AA. These were the people who were able to be quite comfortable identifying themselves with the national health agency in the alcoholism field, but did not have to, unless they wanted to, identify themselves as being recovered alcoholics. They were simply concerned about the problem.

Marty Mann, who was the first woman to recover in AA, had to maintain her anonymity. The founder of the National Council didn't hesitate to speak of her recovery when she talked at congressional hearings and everything else. I never once heard Marty say she was a member of AA. Marty used to grieve about that. She used to say, "It's terrible. I respect the tradition, but I want to give credit to AA." She had emotional problems with it, but she was very clear--she and Bill Wilson had a very clear understanding of the role that NCA could play that he felt that AA could not play.

Ego and Alcoholism

Pomeroy: I think that observing that anonymity is important--let's face it, the ego level is what has had a lot of bearing on people becoming alcoholics.

Blair: Yep.

Morris: What does that mean?

Pomeroy: I'll tell you what it means to me, and I think it's an area that perhaps we should all talk about. But what it means to me is that I had real delusions of grandeur when I was drinking. I could imagine myself in a multitude of roles and what kind wasn't important, but I was splendid. I was a great actress, I had lots of money, I did all kinds of things, none of which were so.

The drinking became a necessity in order to permit me to carry on this way, and my ego demanded this. I was no longer content with being the person that I might have been, at all. I had to be something far out and away and beyond that, and that went on for several years. There is something--well, I think that's enough about that. Somebody else talk about it.

[Pause]

Roberta: I sort of see it also from this slant, which is that I am not sure that I think--I sometimes hear people talk about the alcoholic personality. I don't personally subscribe to any such personality. I don't think I am any different than anybody else. I am me, but I just think I have human failings and assets. I think that there is a difference not between me and any other human being, but I think that those of us who have fatal illnesses, whether it be cancer, alcoholism, diabetes, or whatever have certain things that we must learn in order to stay in remission.

Morris: To live with it.

Roberta: In order to live with it, to live with it as healthily as possible. [Pause] It seems that one of the prerequisites for handling my particular illness is to live in a somewhat constant state of surrender, and that doesn't mean that I don't act. It doesn't mean I don't produce results. It doesn't mean I don't take on responsibility. It means that I remain clear that I am not running the show.

Morris: Because of the physical--?

Roberta: Yes, because if I begin to think I am going to run the show, what I begin to do is I try to change Florette because she is not quite the way I think she should be, and then I'm going to change Bill a little bit over here. I'm going to change the circumstances over there, and I start doing all this. Inevitably, the reality is going to hit. I am going to be disappointed because Florette simply will not--she continues to climb up fire escapes and things, and that is very distressing to me. She won't stop it and I get upset because I know that she broke her hip one time and this and that and I go into this tizzy, and she won't be under my control.

So now I am upset, now I am disappointed when I get into an emotional state where I feel out of control and, when things aren't going my way, the thought will come to me to have a drink. The thought might come to the diabetic to have a candy bar. So I'm not any different. It might come to the person with lung cancer to pick up a cigarette. But the point is that because I have this illness, I need to stay in a state of awareness about what I call my ego.

Other people who don't have this illness can have those kinds of thoughts or feelings or big disappointments or whatever. They can run around and try to manipulate people and it's not going to get them into a state where they are going to take a drink, or if they do take a drink, it's not a problem.

When my father was dying of cancer it was terribly stressful and every evening my mother and my sister and I would go out. We would all go out to dinner and they would each have a martini and they would relax. I, too, would have liked to have had something, but I can't because I have a fatal illness. I am no more emotionally disturbed than my mother and sister. It's just that when there is stress or when there is tension, I cannot drink any more than the diabetic can have a candy bar.

How come I have to watch my ego is not that I am so much more egotistical or worse than anybody else, it's that to stay well, I have to take a step that maybe some other human being doesn't have to because it's not life-threatening to them. I don't know if I am being clear.

Morris: It's very clear. Usually the line of reasoning is that you really aren't going to be able to change somebody else anyhow. If Florette is going to climb up and down the fire escapes, that's her problem, as they say today.

Roberta: Yes, and the irony--God is so incredibly clever--the irony of it is that the thing that makes me feel normal--I subscribe to the belief that any alcoholic who is sober is a miracle, for the simple reason that the normal state for the body of an alcoholic is the drinking state once we have ingested that substance.

In no way would I want to imply that I live white-knuckling it, because I don't. It's not an issue. It's just that there are certain things I simply must be aware of, because the tendency when I am under stress will be to want to take a substance. The tendency when you are under stress might be to want to eat the chocolate bar--

Morris: Or to take a cigarette.

Roberta: To take the cigarette and somebody else's might be to have a screaming temper tantrum. We each have our thing that releases that tension.

Morris: Is this related to the--I don't know where it fits, the step about turning it over?

Roberta: That's it; that is it!

Morris: Was that something that was foreign to you when--?

Roberta: Very foreign. I had never turned anything over to anybody or anything; absolutely not at all. I didn't even know what they were talking about when I came to the fellowship. I thought that is weird. But it works.

Morris: And the statement about the wisdom to know the difference between what I can and can't change.

Pomeroy: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." That is a tool of inestimable value.

Blair: The whole great key.

Pomeroy: It absolutely is. In just those few lines is the whole description of where our ego comes into it: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. Well, immediately my ego has been slightly displaced; the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

Morris: That's the key it seems to me.

Pomeroy: Sure, that's the key, but just how much wisdom am I willing to claim? You had something you were going to say about the ego thing, Blair.

Blair: I think I've lost it. Anyway, what you said about preventing Florette going up and down the ladders is the perfect example of things I cannot change, and yet people think they are going to do that all the time. I see my wife doing it with my children. She thinks that somehow she is going to prevent their doing things and you know that she is not going to be able to--I mean an outsider does, which is very common in life. So it's really food for thought. Of course, it's the kind of situation that produces the dreams that you were talking about earlier, dreams of glory-- very common with all alcoholics, I must say, when drinking.

Morris: More so than the general run of human behavior, frustrated--?

Blair: Oh, yes.

Roberta: But, I think that we must put "when drinking" in there because when not drinking alcoholics are not any more grandiose than other people.

Pomeroy: Oh, no, I don't either, but when drinking--

Roberta: But when drinking, it is definitely part of the syndrome.

Pomeroy: You were out-dancing Pavlova when you were drinking, sure.

Blair: One of the tonic things for me about a meeting--certainly the first ones, but it continues--is the feeling of human solidarity on a very mundane, visceral, we've-all-got-the-same-disease level which is a far cry from the dreams of glory.

Pomeroy: Beautiful.

Sponsorship

Morris: How about the business of sponsorship, which seems to be a key, both having a sponsor yourself when you come into the fellowship and then being a sponsor. Does everybody have to have a sponsor?

Bill: I don't think so, but most do or a lot do.

Pomeroy: Hopefully the thing that sponsorship can do, and I think frequently does, is to provide the person with a bit of an anchor with someone that you have enough confidence in and enough respect for so that you will turn to that person for information about how things work, for advice. As you participate in the AA program, part of the whole process is learning to know oneself much better than most of us have known ourselves. [laughs] I'm not sure what we have been doing. In my case, I'm not sure what I had been doing for over forty years, but I had been doing it and I didn't know very much about myself.

As you begin to deal with this business of learning about yourself, part of the process is finding--attempting at least--to determine what the danger signals may be for you that may lead you down the path toward drinking again because one of the things that one has to come to terms with is that one cannot drink. That sounds like such a lovely, simple statement, and many of us have made it many, many times before we made the final effort.

But the thing that can prove to be enormously helpful and where a sponsor can play a significant role has to do with encouraging you to find and identify those things that may be hazardous for you and then being able to help you find out from the experience of others what kind of steps they had taken.

I can remember those three wonderful women that volunteered to be my sponsors because I didn't have a sponsor.

Morris: Three? It took three sponsors to--

Roberta: They found you!

Pomeroy: [laughter] They just walked up to me at the end of a meeting and said, "Do you have a sponsor?" I said, "No, I don't."

They said, "Yes, you do, all three of us." What I learned first from one of them was when I said, "I live alone and I still have the feeling that is a great hazard for me because it is time by myself and when I am lonely."

Jeannie said, "I have been living alone off and on for a good many years, and here are the kind of things that I have done to help me prevent that loneliness."

Somebody else will say, "My great problem is that if I get terribly disappointed about something, my inclination is to go and get a drink." And somebody else will tell you what they have done. So the sponsorship role is one--you've probably done more sponsoring than anybody I know, Bill.

Bill: It doesn't seem like a lot. I remember looking at it from my point of view, of do I want a sponsor. I think of a role model, in a sense, as someone that I can look at and say, "They seem to have it together" or, "Their life is working now," and know that they have been through the same kind of bad experience, so to speak, that I have. So I think of it as role model. I think of it as resource of information, a resource of things to do, the kind of thing that Florette is talking about. What can you do to deal with these things. Someone I am willing to turn to, someone I feel comfortable with, don't feel judged or threatened by.

Morris: Do people ever change sponsors?

Bill: Oh, yes, and that seems to me perfectly appropriate. I just feel like I've gone through a lot of changes myself, in my attitudes and in my needs, and so what is next for me in my process may be someone who is particularly appropriate for whatever the next thing is, like staying away from that first drink. I didn't stay away from that first drink. So many times, as Florette says, I get disappointed and I want a drink. Even when I get up in the morning, I want to drink! Get dressed and want a drink. All of this, and how do you deal with those things. Later on, maybe, on a more esoteric scale, what about ego and you get into some big, long, philosophical discussion.

So it just seems that the different levels I've been in my process, I kind of gravitate--turn--to different people for what they have to offer.

- Morris: Is it an informal gravitating or is it as formal as, "Will you be my sponsor?"
- Bill: Often it ends up being, "Will you be my sponsor," which I think is good because it's kind of a shorthand term for defining a relationship, and there are responsibilities both ways.
- Morris: It's a kind of a verbal contract.
- Bill: Yes, it is, and it has particular meaning in the context of AA. The thing I say about undertaking sponsorship, it really is a commitment to that individual that you will be there for them. You are saying, "Hey, look, you now hold a high priority in my life and I am willing to respond." In effect you are saying, "There are a lot of things I am willing to drop that I otherwise would be doing in order to be with you when you call."
- Morris: Did you find that a difficult kind of responsibility to take on when you were recovered?
- Bill: At times, no, and at times, yes. It seems like there were times when, in my process, sponsorship was what gave me a sense not only of making a contribution, but gave me a sense of my own growth and was the thing for me to do.
- There was a period when I spent a lot of time in that mode. Then it got to a time when I realized that when people would talk to me about it that it began to feel like an imposition and I would say to myself, "I'm not sure I have time for that." As soon as I began to have those feelings, I realized that would not make me a good sponsor for them because it really is a two-way street. It really is a commitment.
- Morris: How do you deal with it? If you feel it's a burden and an obligation to be a sponsor, is that somehow letting down AA?
- Bill: No, I don't think so. In fact, I think it is very supportive of it in the sense that what we are trying to do in AA--I talk about it being an honest program--is to be in that position where we can let the people know what is going on. If I don't have the time or feel I am unwilling to take the time, that to me--there was a time when that was very difficult for me. Learning how to say no is one of the things I had to go through.
- Morris: Right, that is what I'm getting at.
- Bill: There were times I said "yes" when I wished I had been able to say "no". The inability to say no was really my fear that I would be unable to get it across to that person in a supportive way where

they wouldn't take it personally. Let's explore other options for them--how do I say no without them getting mad or without me--again, ego comes into play.

It feels good when someone comes up and I can say, "I can be your sponsor." I must be pretty hot stuff if someone wants me to be their sponsor. How do I deal with that saying no and that I can't take on just innumerable burdens, or what's going on if I'm saying no? Is my sobriety being threatened somehow? Am I not working my AA program the way I should. A lot of that stuff came up. But getting to the point where I can talk to somebody and say no and have them feel supported by it--

Morris: Is quite an accomplishment.

Bill: Yes, and not an easy one.

Pomeroy: Part of that process too, I think, has to do with the importance of the person who wants a sponsor exposing themselves to enough people in enough meetings so that they have had a chance to begin to learn a little bit about--if somebody sees you speaking at a meeting and, "Oh gee, isn't he terrific, I'd like him for a sponsor," if it is the one and only time they've ever seen you, they may be making a very serious mistake. Of course, not in your case! [laughter]

Bill: Yes, absolutely, sure.

Pomeroy: At least my sense has been that when I have spoken at a meeting and some lovely gal has walked up to me and said, "Oh, I've been waiting to hear you. Would you be my sponsor?" My advice is to say, "Sweetie, you don't know me. You better look around a bit and make sure."

One of the things that I think some of us have been feeling, at least I speak for myself, I feel that we somehow need to revive some real sense of concern and willingness about sponsorship. I think a lot of people are coming in very quickly and there is not as much said about sponsorship and that there is not as much done about it.

Blair: I think we've got a point. I mean it occurs to me that--

Pomeroy: Did you ever sponsor, Blair?

- Blair: Well, yes and no. There was somebody I sort of thought of as a sponsor for a while but I sort of drifted away from rather quickly and never actually said to anybody else, "Would you be my sponsor?" Although I talked with a lot of people and sat down--there were people I would call if I felt like it.
- Morris: The one meeting that I went to, it seemed like there was some of that in that occasionally people, in sharing where they were that evening--
- Pomeroy: Would refer to their sponsors.
- Morris: They would refer to their sponsors, but there was some sense just in the give and take, that they were getting kinds of answers from what other people were saying about--
- Pomeroy: In the group?
- Morris: Yes.
- Pomeroy: That's a very common process; a lot of that goes on.
- Roberta: I also think of sponsorship--I never asked anybody to be my sponsor. I think when I came in, for some reason I didn't hear much about it and, as I say, there weren't many people--there were no women my age and [laughs] I hadn't met her (Florette) yet. Basically, you've become my sponsor. I had never even asked you to be my sponsor. I just made you my sponsor and that's sort of how it's been. But I have been asked to be a sponsor and I think of it very seriously. I think sponsorship is the most responsible position to be in.
- Pomeroy: You bet.
- Roberta: Here is where the ego comes in. There was a time when I was doing a lot of speaking and that would happen every time I would speak, three or four people would come up: "Would you be my sponsor?" They didn't know me, I didn't know them, and my little ego would just go la-ti-ta-ti-da.
- Pomeroy: The other thing was you were one of the few younger women who were very active.
- Roberta: Yes, that's right.
- Pomeroy: So you had practically every young woman who came along. Once they had heard Roberta, they would say, "Oh, I wonder if she would be my sponsor."

Roberta: So I really had to watch that.

The thing that for me was important--as I say, I never asked someone specifically to be my sponsor. I see that I ran around. When I finally did get connected, it was very important to be connected to people who would not buy my stuff. Who would not let me get by with my numbers. So in sponsorship it was very important for me to come at it not from the viewpoint of wanting to be liked, because if I want the person that I am sponsoring to like me, I am not going to be able to say, "Look, this is what I see, this is what I . . .

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Roberta: And it was difficult when it came down to, "Look, you could be getting yourself into trouble with that" or whatever. So sponsorship for me just requires a real high degree of responsibility and observation of one's ego.

Bill: The other thing about ego when you are being a sponsor is you have to be careful just to pick the winners. [much laughter]

Roberta: So that when they tell their story you--

Blair: You don't want to sponsor someone who is not going to make it through the program.

Morris: Isn't that the purpose of the role model?

Pomeroy: What about it, Bill? Do you only sponsor winners?

Bill: When there are a lot of people who ask you to be their sponsors, you want to make a quick judgment on whether they are going to make it on the program because you don't want to have a reputation of sponsoring people who get drunk.

Roberta: Who fall out.

Pomeroy: Bill, I'm a failure because I buried some of mine.

Roberta: Yes, I know, I think some of us haven't done too well.

Morris: It sounds like it takes a tremendous commitment of time.

Roberta: It might. It's going to depend on the individual. There is a woman that I sponsored for eight years and when I initially said that I would be her sponsor, I suspected that it was going to be a lifetime commitment, and it has been. She still requires a lot of

my time and I just love her. There was a time there when other people would ask me and I wouldn't even take them on because of my commitment to this woman. I still feel very strongly about it.

Morris: Just on general support or has she gone back to drinking?

Roberta: She has never gone back to drinking, but she is--

Pomeroy: She has needed a friend and counselor and you--

Roberta: That's right. She has been highly emotional through all of this. It's been difficult for her to stay sober, she has gone through incredible things, but she has stayed sober. But it's like all of those things I have to take responsibility for in sponsorship. I see it as a very big issue and one that can be taken too lightly.

Pomeroy: Certainly as I look back on those three women, all three of whom are now dead, they were all older than I, they had been around a while when I first knew them. But I would say that in the first five or six years that I was around the program, they were absolutely invaluable. The first year, of course, they were priceless because if I failed to show up where I was supposed to be, I had a telephone call within thirty minutes. I mean there was no fooling around.

Morris: From not one person but three!

Pomeroy: They would take turns. Barbara would say, "Have you seen Florette?" Jean would say "No, I'll go call her."

Roberta: That's great!

Pomeroy: Yes. The third one was Harriet who eventually was the central office secretary.

Roberta: Oh, for heaven sakes!

Spiritual Strength of the Group

Pomeroy: Yes. There are a number of things we haven't talked very much about because this program is something that one can discourse on at great length. But I think that the spiritual content of the program is, for many of us, the final, significant force. It's not necessarily a commitment to a belief in God as we may have

grown up understanding or believing, but it is to a spiritual force of some kind in our lives that, at least for--I'm going to speak for myself--had to materialize.

That spiritual force had to materialize before I could begin to put in perspective some of my goals and objectives in life because, frankly, I had gone from being kind of a wonder kid at a very young age to being quite successful in a variety of ways. I was far more interested in money, status, and material successes, and those were the things that were more important to me at that point in my life than anything else. The realization that I had really separated myself totally from any spiritual identification of any kind--once I came back into the real world. That's what my drinking did for me. It gave me another world in which to live--not that I lived there twenty-four hours a day, but I lived there enough so it was the real world to me.

But when I came back in to the world as it really is and found that I had absolutely no spiritual tie of any kind, it was an incredibly bereft feeling. In my case, as a Roman Catholic who had separated herself completely from the church, I didn't really have anywhere to go.

I guess the Jesuits really did a snow job on me because I could not look at any other formal religion. I absolutely blocked totally on that and yet here I was unacceptable, as far as I was concerned, to the Catholic church. They wouldn't have me and I didn't think I wanted to leave them.

What I found in AA was a spiritual force created by a group of people, and I had no difficulty rather quickly persuading myself that here was something bigger than I and that this group of people was somehow bound together in a way that they created a strength and that I was free to become a part of that. I had to make the choice to be a part of it because nobody was going to take me by the hand, but it was there if I wanted it.

That was the beginning of what I think I've said to myself a number of times [laughs] was my spiritual redevelopment program. I really had to go in and plow, and it took years for me. But it is that very strong nonmaterial component that is the part of the fellowship that has to me an enormous force.

Blair: Yes, I quite agree with that.

Morris: Had you been closely involved with some kind of religion?

Blair: No, in fact, I was baptized an Episcopalian when I was sixteen--a little late! [laughs] I did it because my sister wanted to be baptized and she said, "Come along." I was, if anything, an Episcopalian, but it didn't really as a church mean anything to me. However, I had always been interested. I took a course in high school in comparative religions, for example, which shows that I was to some extent interested.

The spiritual component was actually a surprise to me. I went to Duffy's up at Calistoga. That's where I got sober. I knew that there was an AA but I had always thought that it was for somebody else--a familiar story! [laughter] I was sort of stumbling around in the orchards back of Duffy's quite a lot trying to make myself healthier. I was physically very weak and I just went out to get some exercise.

I had some sort of a spiritual experience in which I felt that I was nearly dead and that there was some force that was in a sense killing me both literally and figuratively, and that there must be a countervailing force. It wasn't all that easy and in those neat words, but I had this feeling.

I have never become a churchgoer since, although I with fair frequency walk into churches and sit down. But I don't go to services, and it doesn't matter what kind of a church. It's just this quiet place which is dedicated to that sort of purpose. The meetings themselves really, as Florette pointed out, are what give you this feeling, a commonality, a spiritual commonality.

Pomeroy: Somehow at a point where you haven't believed in very much--you have lost that belief in yourself and you are full of wonderment as to where you are and how you got there and why, to find that it is possible to share with a group of people a little sense of faith that things can be all right, it's a powerful and moving experience. It's interesting, it comes back very often all year round.

Bill: That's right, except when I used to try to get it back I remember in AA meetings it was one of the first times I had had that spiritual sort of experience with other people. With me it wasn't tied in at all with religion because I had very little religion in my background. I was a late baptized Episcopalian and I sang in the--

Roberta: Me too! [laughter]

Bill: Maybe we found a pattern here! I sang in the church choir and had spiritual experiences in a church but I didn't think it was being religious. It had nothing to do with the study of God or any

belief in God.

Morris: A personal--

Bill: Yes, just a very personal thing and the only other place I can recall having it was in the great outdoors, out sailing alone at night on the water.

Morris: Indeed, in the sunset.

Bill: Yes, that kind of thing, and to have it in this meeting! I see it based, as you said, in that commonality. For me, it came from dropping the ego and all the judgments and all of that stuff that goes with it and really experiencing my oneness with the other people there, not just saying, "Oh, yes, we have the same disease," but really experiencing the oneness. It is incredibly powerful.

I remember having that and being afraid of it; asking what is that, what does it mean? What have I tapped into and of almost a frightening sense of power and that common feeling, as if to say what does it mean if I experience that? Do I have to marry everybody in the room? [laughter] Turn my life over to it? Wow, and then wanting it and saying, "Good, all I have to do is go back to a meeting and I'll have it again," and going back to the meeting trying to have it, and it not being there, of course, that is the ego trying to get it.

So it has been an incredible experience. What it's done is it has given me chances to put myself in an environment where I can experience it, and I find that it has broadened--expanded--my ability to experience it elsewhere and with other people and in other situations.

Blair: That's right and it's a remarkable thing. I believe that we are all talking about very much the same thing. I think we've all had the same experience. It's remarkable how it can change your feeling about not only the people in this room--the meeting room--but [when] you walk out of the room.

New Personal Relationships

Morris: Those skills you develop in facing yourself and dealing with your trouble spots carry over in your relationships with other people?

Blair: Oh, yes, I think they do. But I was thinking of the sort of spiritual feeling when you walk out on the street and if you have just come out of a meeting, it's a different feeling with all of these other people around.

Yes, sure, after all the whole AA--the book, the meeting, everything--has to do with life, not just a segmented part of it. So it has to do with your relationships with other people. Maybe they don't notice. It is just as well they don't.

Pomeroy: But it does have--it has in many ways a pretty profound effect on one's relationships with other people. The thing Roberta touched on earlier, she was talking about ego, and that is the degree to which without becoming a doormat in any sense of the word, you become able to let other people have their place and be themselves and to feel supportive of them without trying to tell them how to run their lives.

When I finally surrendered to the reality of my drinking in my early forties, I had spent twenty-five years very energetically manipulating other people's lives and I did it very well. [laughter] I really did!

Bill: You may have won the Nobel prize! [more laughter]

Pomeroy: I did it extremely—I virtually tore two husbands to pieces without their hardly knowing it. [laughter] Yes, that's the touch. I really had manipulated an enormous number of people. I had bent people to my will; I think very subtly in some cases, but pretty brutally in others. Well, when you've lived that way for twenty-five years and you are brought face to face with the consequences of your behavior, and those consequences are really self-destruction--that's where I was--then you start to think about what right do I have to try and manage somebody else's life. I'm going to climb that ladder and you can't stop me! [laughter]

Roberta: I think, too, the thing about manipulating people in our relationships with other people, it's as if--when Blair says maybe other people don't notice it, I think that's an important point because what I actually do might not be so different. But the thing that's different is--and this is kind of a catch-all phrase, I don't like it, but I can't think of another one--the thing that makes the difference is the place that I am coming from about what I am doing, and that's where the spiritual experience transforms everything.

So a concrete example would be maybe when I did stop drinking. He [Bill] didn't stop drinking and I wanted him to stop drinking because I knew that it would be better for him if he

stopped drinking. So I dragged him to AA meetings and I tried to talk him into this or that or the other thing and tried to get him to make commitments and I'd try to blah-blah-blah.

At the same time, I was going to meetings and I finally began to hear little things like "let go and let God" sort of stuff and became willing to turn my life over to the care of God as I understood Him and prayed only for knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry that out and things like that.

I had no spiritual or religious or anything—I mean I was the late Episcopalian too, but certainly no experience of any of this; some flashes of good things. I decided to try prayer and I didn't understand it and I'd say "Pray only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry out." That was all. So I thought, "What do you do?" So I climbed under the covers and I was very embarrassed. I mean there wasn't anybody around, but I was very embarrassed to do this and I'd say, "What is Your will and the power to carry it out, and what do I do about this fact that he won't stop drinking like I know he should."

Finally, something began to come through and there is no way I can describe it. And the thing was that I had broken up with him. I had broken up with him in order to manipulate him to quit and all that; that was the point that I wanted to make.

Finally, what came through was, "let go, let him go; stop trying to manipulate his life." So I let him go, and what it looked like on the outside was that I had broken up with him again. What was different about that? Except that the place that I was coming from about it was not to manipulate him; it was simply to let him go.

What happened—I don't know why it happened. I'm sure he doesn't know. Maybe you do know why it happened. I don't know why it happened, but a month later he walked into an AA meeting and he has been sober ever since and now we're together.

Now, on the outside, that might have looked like manipulation, like I broke up with him in order to get him to quit, which he then did and therefore it all turned out. That wasn't the motivation. What the spiritual experience of AA is about for me is being willing to let go, to become detached from things that I want to hang on to, like booze, like relationships, like jobs or whatever—to experience whatever I have to experience as a result of that detachment and to somehow know that my spirit will survive, whether my body does or not.

Morris: That what happens is right.

Roberta: Exactly, exactly. So it transforms everything. The people around me may not notice anything different about me, but what they seem to notice is that they feel different around me. For example, after I got sober my mother changed.

Morris: They feel better about you, better being around you?

Roberta: Yes, or they feel better about themselves. I may look like just as much a jerk as ever before by my actions or whatever because they may not be that different, but something transforms in the relationship. They feel more able to deal with me even though the way it looks may not appear that much different. I don't know if I am being clear.

The form may not change, but the essence does and then out of that, of course, eventually the form does change; eventually it does. But it's different from how I wanted to do it before, which was to try to change the form, manipulate the form of things, to get them to look the way they should look and be the way they should be. It never worked--never!

Bill: What you do is let it go and let it be the way it is going to be.

Roberta: That's right, and then it changes.

Bill: Often the way it goes when you let go is what you were going to change it.

Roberta: Almost always, almost always it turns out the way--you wanted.

Morris: For your reasons or the situation's reasons?

Bill: Never for your reasons, never for your reasons. That's the ego again, having reasons why things should be a particular way.

Roberta: So my ego would love nothing more than to sit here and say, "I got him sober." But that's an out and out lie.

Bill: Yes, it was another gal! [laughter]

A Framework for Life; Going Through the Steps

Morris: You have all described some very powerful, very positive feelings and attitude changes that seem to have come about through the AA process. Would you have arrived at those kinds of revelations about yourself and the world if you hadn't gone through alcoholism?

Bill: I don't think I would have arrived at them at the same time in any event. What happened in AA for me seemed like a real reversal in a process, or a point in my process where there is a marked change. Incidentally, AA is sometimes looked at narrowly as having to do with drinking, and after my drinking got handled and very shortly after I quit drinking--drinking just was never an issue for me.

Now, I never feel in any danger of going out and drinking again, but only the first step AA has to do with that. Then there is all the rest of it, which I really didn't want to deal with, [laughter] which had to do with cleaning up my relationships with people and my relationship with myself and getting my life in a way that worked a lot better for me.

That is what AA does, but it takes the thing that was the most difficult problem for me to deal with in my life and showed me how to deal with it. What I missed seeing for years was that I didn't have any problems that were as bad as the alcohol one, and AA showed me how to deal with that one. Therefore, I could also deal with any of the other (lesser) problems in my life. AA really doesn't have to do with drinking, it has to do with living. It's a way of living and is often referred to as that--the AA way of life.

Specific problems can be dealt with in the AA mode, and we see examples of that springing up all over the place, like Overeaters Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. What they do is take the AA program and take out the word alcoholic and put in addict, or take out the word alcoholic and put in overeater or smoker or whatever it may be, and it really does work.

When I look at AA as a way of life, I see that what is being said there--you're talking about form. The spiritual part of that program has been presented in many ways and is continually presented in many ways. Some people get it through the church. Some people really do get a spiritual way of life out of the church. I never did. Some people get it out of the readings of, I don't know, some ancient Far East mystic or some guru on the top of a mountain.

Pomeroy: Aristotle.

Bill: The form is difficult, but Christ was saying the same thing that Bill Wilson was saying and that a lot of people are saying.

Blair: I am glad that you brought up the way of life because I don't think anything much has been said about the steps. Perhaps you know about that, but the phrase "the program" may sound just amorphous. But there is a program for somebody coming into AA and it's laid out in those steps. In principal, one goes through the steps. It takes a while, it might even take you sort of forever [laughter], but that is the basis of what he calls the way of life, the AA way of life. It is a very important thing that there is that framework, I think. People don't go through it in any regimented sort of way. There is no class in it.

Pomeroy: There are no mandates as to when or how.

Morris: You don't get a diploma.

Roberta: [laughs] No, unfortunately.

Blair: People get stuck on certain steps and, either rightly or wrongly, the wisdom is not to hurdle them, but just to stay around until you get through that one.

Morris: Some of them don't seem to end, as you were saying. The one about making a listing your shortcomings--looking at it from the outside, it looks like going to people and saying, "I did wrong by you," would be a very difficult thing to do.

Blair: That's, of course, a tough one, and in principal you only have to do it once. I mean if you don't get drunk again, you can take care of it. That's why that black fellow turned up to see me. He felt he had done me wrong.

Pomeroy: Oh, he was making amends.

Blair: Yes, he said, "I know I didn't really do you wrong, but you were nice enough to take it at a meeting and I never came back and I never talked to you again and so on. So I wanted to--" That's what he was doing and now he has done it, and I haven't heard from him since. He lives down in San Jose, and I don't suppose I will.

Bill: And yet with the people we are in daily contact with, that thing of making amends becomes an ongoing process.

Roberta: Oh, it's an ongoing process, but the thing I think Blair is talking about is that Eighth Step, where you have to write that list and then the Ninth Step, go and actually--and you have this list of people in your past where you have covered up all of these disasters. I mean I did; I can't speak for anybody else.

Pomeroy: [laughs] You're not alone, dear!

Roberta: I suddenly realized I'm speaking for the whole world to hear, and to confront that, to go to my ex-husband and say, "I really do see what I did. I see how I contributed and I see how I blamed you for everything." But then the look on his face, like, "Oh, my God"--it was well worth it, when I was willing to take some responsibility.

Some people have real--they have like prison possibilities and everything, and they clean it up. Then it seems to me that Ten, Eleven, and Twelve have a lot to do with the continuing process of all of these steps that originally have been done. Then it's like, now, keep it cleaned up.

Pomeroy: They are the lifetime steps, the three steps on which you maintain and build; there's a process.

Roberta: There really is the chance to continue to go back and look at the other, first steps and say, "Am I still in touch with them, am I still doing them?"

Bill: That is the basis really for the spiritual aspect of the program. Those are the steps that get me in touch with the spiritual part of the program; it's in performing those steps.

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Pomeroy: I said I believed that it is very important to me that this part of my life be included in any history. The reason is that without the experience of AA I would not have had the experiences that I have had for the last twenty-eight years. They literally turned my life around.

Roberta: Yes, mine too.

Bill: Absolutely.

Pomeroy: I don't think I would be alive for one thing. I'll just start with sort of simple fact.

I would not have survived. I had done the medical route, I had done the spiritual route, I had done the psychiatric route,

and that nearly sent me off the bridge. So I don't think I would be here, had it not been for this experience. And then, I crawled back into the world in which I had functioned at one time, but on a very modest level. I had a tiny little job, and when that job grew into something a little better and a little more useful, more important, without the things I was then learning in AA, I would not have been able to tackle the next thing that came along, which was the opportunity to be director of the United Community Fund. But by that time, I had learned something about myself. I had learned something about how to relate to other people comfortably, and I had begun to gain some confidence again. So this experience is pivotal as far as my life is concerned.

Roberta: It has been very exciting for me.

Blair: Yes, it is fun to talk about it.

Bill: It really is. I haven't done this in a long time.

Pomeroy: It's fun to talk about it on a basis quite different to what we do in a meeting. It's very different.



Mrs. Pomeroy at her desk in San Francisco United Community Fund-United Bay Area Crusade headquarters on Steiner Street, shortly after her appointment as director of UCF, 1958.



Going over budget figures with Frank Sloss, Ronald Born (chief of city social services), and Monsignor William Flynn, 1959.



Board meeting presentation by John Newkom, possibly of United Crusade long-range organizational planning, of which he was chairman in 1958. Left, Frank Sloss; in glasses, Selah Chamberlain.

XII BUILDING A NEW CAREER; SAN FRANCISCO FEDERATED FUND,
1954-1958

Leslie Ganyard's Help

Morris: When you were in your own process of recovery, was there a spell there when you didn't work at all, you were focussing completely on your own recovery?

Pomeroy: It was a very short spell because I had borrowed money from my mother for that last treatment experience, came back to the city and through Leslie Ganyard, God rest her soul, wonderful woman that she was--* You didn't know her, did you?

Morris: No, but I feel like I am sort of parenthetically collecting the story of the Ganyards.

Pomeroy: Yes, a marvelous, wonderful person. I was put in touch with the San Francisco Federated Fund people.

I came back believing that my future was my past. [laughs] I didn't think I had any future. But the one person whom I had known many, many years that I felt I could go to and that she would not go into shock when I said I had just come back from an alcohol recovery program was Leslie, and indeed that was precisely her response and her reaction. She was marvelous.

I said the first thing I have to concern myself with is what kind of a job can I possibly get. I said I know that my reputation now with the federal government is such that there is no way

*Mrs. Ganyard was then executive of the Rosenberg Foundation, possibly the only foundation staff person in San Francisco in that period.

in which I can go back there, and I think that carries over to any public employment. I would expect the feds to give that kind of a response if they were asked why I had left Civil Defense.

So Leslie said, "I don't know whether they are doing any hiring now or not"—this was the middle of July—"but go over and talk to Chuck Isaacs, who is running the campaign for the San Francisco Federated Fund," which was the San Francisco fund-raising arm of the San Francisco Community Chest. Lo and behold, they had a campaign assistant's job and didn't go into very much questioning about why I wasn't working or what I had been doing, looked at the European experience and then two years with Civil Defense. My departure from Civil Defense was indeed a resignation. I didn't have to say I was fired.

So they said, "We've got this temporary campaign job and the man who is going to be the chairman of the division is Belford Brown over at the San Francisco Bank. We'll call him and you go over to talk to him and if he thinks you could do the campaign assistant job, why, that's fine, you can have it."

So I went over and talked to Belford Brown who turned out to be the most delightful gentleman in the world. He laughed and said, "I don't know really why you want this job, but if you want it, I don't know what I'm doing and if you have never done this before, we will sort of find out together!" So off we went. It was just marvelous!

Morris: Did Chuck Isaacs know what he wanted in qualifications for that job?

Pomeroy: No, I don't think so.

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Morris: Did Leslie, while you were going through your own process of establishing sobriety, did she know what you had been going through?

Pomeroy: Oh, no, she had not known what I was going through. I had probably seen Leslie three or four times in the two years that I had been back in San Francisco and never when I was drinking. If I had lunch with Leslie, I didn't drink at lunch. So when I went to her, and I can remember so vividly going up to her office, which was at the Rosenberg Foundation in the same office they are now in, going up there and sitting down and saying, "Leslie, I have something that is probably going to surprise you. It is rather

serious and I need to talk to you for half an hour or so," and then sat there and said, "I have just come back from five weeks in an alcoholism recovery program."

Dear Leslie said, "What do you mean an alcoholism recovery program? You don't have a drinking problem." I said, "Today I don't have but, believe me, I have had." We went on then and got into a lot of discussion about--and as so often happens, Leslie's personal interest in this immediately was tapped into. Her brother was an alcoholic.

Morris: Did she offer any advice and counsel, or did any of your discussion relate to the possible stigma attached to you?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, and here is where Leslie was so marvelous and so helpful to me because when I said, "One of the things I need to be clear about in my own mind when I go to apply for a job is what do I say about whether or not I have a drinking problem." Leslie stopped me right there and she said, "You had a drinking problem. As of today, you do not have."

Morris: It used to be a question that was asked in San Francisco as part of an employment interview.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes; oh, have you now or have you ever had a drinking problem was frequently asked on employment questionnaires. It is no longer legal to ask it.

Leslie said, "Don't volunteer that information. At some point, you may feel that it's important for an employer prior to your employment to know that this is so." I did not feel that that was so in that temporary campaign job, believing that it was what they said it was, a four-month job. So I didn't volunteer the information.

Regaining Confidence; Women and Work

The most remarkable thing happened. I was hired promptly and went immediately to work. The night before I started the job I had been at the Alano Club, which was where the AA people gathered, and there I had met a man named Ed, among a number of other people that I met for the first time. We had gone back to the Alano Club after an AA meeting.

When I was being taken around the Federated Fund headquarters over at 47 Kearney Street to be introduced to people who were working in the campaign, we walked down the long, long open office and right down at the end of it is the friend I met the night before, Ed. Ed looks at me and says, "How nice to see you again." And I look at Ed and say, "How nice to see you again."

We foregathered at an early opportunity for a cup of coffee, and we explained that we were going to be very helpful to each other for the duration of this campaign. And indeed we were. When the going got rough, you could look out and say, "Gee, I think I'll go and have a cup of coffee with Ed," and you'd talk about how this is a pretty wild business we're in, isn't it? "Yes, but we don't have to take a drink over it."

Morris: Was he also temporary?

Pomeroy: A temporary campaign worker.

Morris: Was he at about the same stage you were, recently--?

Pomeroy: I think he had been around a little bit longer but not Much. It turned out that he was a person who came and went in AA. He would fall off the wagon and do a little more drinking and then come back. When I see him now, once in a blue moon, he'll look at me and say, "I wish I had done it the way you did." He has been in and out and in and out and probably today has maybe five years of sobriety or something like that.

Morris: What did he mean by he wished he had done it the way you did?

Pomeroy: Staying with it, that's all, just a day at a time hacking it out.

Morris: Did you--is temptation the word? While you were in that initial--

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, that first year there were many times when--

I loved the job just because I like campaigning. It is not the thing I would choose to do for the rest of my life now, but at the time I just loved it, and I loved working with the volunteers. I took to it like a duck takes to water because I love working with volunteers, always have, and we had just masses of volunteers. But I went to an AA meeting every night.

There was just no way in which I had any sense of security about not drinking because I had gone through this year of in and out of that place. The last stay was either the eighth or the

ninth. I guess it was the ninth. I think I had been there eight times before. So I had no--[laughs] I wasn't self-assured or self-confident or anything else about not drinking again.

But the turning point probably came, oh, five or six months, sometime in November or December. I still remember rather vividly walking back in--I lived up on Telegraph Hill by myself. I walked into my living room and something had occurred. I don't know what. I have no recollection now what it was. But it prompted me to think as long as I don't take a drink, there isn't anything in the world that is going to be right for me to do that I can't do. That was some kind of a minor revelation of some kind. This was coming in after an AA meeting where there had been discussion about how--and most of the meetings that I went to were sort of beginners' meetings or quasi-beginners meetings and that sort of thing, because I was still working pretty hard at learning what it was that was keeping all of these people sober.

Morris: When you say beginners' meetings, did you seek out a group in which most of the people were newly sober?

Pomeroy: No. Beginners' meetings are meetings that are organized and conducted by people with some sobriety in order to help newcomers become familiar with the program. They are classified as beginners meetings. My reason for seeking them out to the extent that I did was to hear what the people who were running them had to say in the way of suggestion or advice for beginners, but not particularly--I wasn't particularly interested in the companionship of other people who were newly started. I wanted to stick around with the people who had had some sobriety and that I was going to learn from and sort of feel the insurance of really partaking of their sobriety and being comfortable with them.

Morris: So it is almost a class situation. You have got parallel people all drawing the same kind of support from those ahead of you in the race, as it were?

Pomeroy: Yes, and I can remember early in, maybe sometime in the first year, being in an AA meeting and being called on and saying "I am grateful for a lot of things, but one of the things I am awfully grateful for is that there were a lot of these ladies who went before me." Because by this time I had my three ladies who had decided to sponsor me and I was very open in my gratitude to them for having gotten there first because it gave me something to hang onto.

Morris: Was it important to you that they were women and that you had a female as a model?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, very.

Morris: It wouldn't have worked as well if it had been a--?

Pomeroy: It didn't work as well. All of that first year that I was going back and forth to the farm, most of the people I saw up there were men. The only women that I saw there (there were probably one or two each time I was there) were what one would call the losers; they were the people who had been there and had come back. So it was very important to find that there were some women who indeed had remained sober.

Morris: In those years, did you think of, were you aware of, feeling either that women were not doing as well in the fields that you had chosen or that you needed female support, that men didn't feel things the same way women did?

Pomeroy: No, that's an interesting part of, really, my whole career, Gaby, because all of the years that I worked in jobs, and that goes from the very beginning really, starting with the old Reconstruction Finance Corporation and continuing on through the whole World War II housing, WPA [Works Progress Administration], on into the European experience, I was never acutely conscious of any discrimination of any kind because I was a woman. I seem to have moved into and carried out jobs that were generally--not exclusively--but generally held by men, but without any sense of being put down at all in doing it and not any sense that I particularly had to fight for my job.

The first real pressure that I felt in a job because I was a woman was when I was named director of the [S.F.] United Community Fund. That was the first time a woman had been named to a major community fund as the executive, the first time anywhere in the country. That pressure I felt and, of course, that was 1957, which coincides with the awakening of the women's movement. I think that is why I felt the pressure.

Morris: The way you phrase that, it almost sounds as if the development of a women's movement produced a negative response in the rest of the community. Is that a logical--?

Pomeroy: Yes, I think it did. I think the women's movement has moved steadily forward, God bless us, and without any terribly active participation on my part I have to say. I felt that the major contribution I made between 1958 and 1968, the ten-year period when I was in major community jobs, the major contribution I made was doing a good job and earning--

Morris: Being a role model?

Pomeroy: Being a role model, so that at no point could anyone point to me and say, "There is a good reason we shouldn't have women in major jobs." I felt a great responsibility in that area. The result was evident, I think, to a degree in those first years in the Fund. Twelve-hour days and six-day weeks were the norm for me for at least the first two years. I began to ease off a little bit when I felt that I really had part of the job at least under my belt.

The Robin Hood Theory of Fundraising

Morris: Before we get into your executive responsibilities, could you tell me a little more about the fundraising campaign and what appealed to you about fundraising? Not everybody--and that's an understatement--is enthusiastic about fundraising.

Pomeroy: I evolved for myself, when I got into the fundraising job--and I had never been directly involved in any fundraising up to that point--but I evolved for myself what I called the Robin Hood theory.

Morris: To take from the rich and give to the poor?

Pomeroy: Absolutely. I thought that anybody with money ought to be grateful if they have an opportunity to do something useful with some part of that money and, therefore, I felt good about helping them find out what they could do. I have used this with volunteers in an effort to break down their resistance to fundraising. I don't think it has taken the world by storm, by any means, but I think it has been helpful to some volunteers who have accepted fundraising responsibility, but have had the antipathy, the embarrassment, about asking people for money. I overcame that very quickly.

Morris: How did you--?

Pomeroy: Just as I say, by applying to myself this Robin Hood theory. This is a bit of egomania, I guess. I did recognize that not everybody was comfortable in working with volunteers and trying to get them to feel as excited about a project as you did. I was perfectly comfortable doing that. This may go back to the fact that my mother was an actress and I had wanted to be one too and the "role" of motivation was one I enjoyed.

Morris: Did Mr. Isaacs operate on this theory at all, or did you and he discuss this idea?

Pomeroy: Oh, no, he was in a very exalted position. I seldom saw Mr. Isaacs. My supervisor was a man by the name of Hoffman, Al Hoffman, and so I saw him more often. But I really didn't learn that from anybody. I kind of made it up myself and one lesson I learned long, long ago, was that until you have a pretty good idea of what you are doing, don't talk about it.

So I did all of the things that I was supposed to do. I would sit down with--there was a very nice man, a little bit older than I, not much, close to my own age, named Chuck Perlman, who was a little, tiny man. He was a watch charm he was so small. Chuck was the head of a section and his desk was right next to mine. Very early Chuck would say to me, "Now, if there is anything I can help you with, don't hesitate to ask."

And I asked. I would say, "Chuck, what would you do with this and how do we do this and this." He really taught me, a colleague sitting next to me, taught me most of all that I had to learn in order to do my assignment in that campaign.

Morris: What was your assignment?

Pomeroy: My assignment was to staff a section of the commerce and industry division. For the life of me, I cannot remember what our section covered, but the fact that the chairman of it was a banker leads me to think that we may have had the banks, probably, among other things. The reason I am so vague about it is because all of the subsequent years that I was involved with campaigns in one way or another, we were always revising the structure and it was always different.

Morris: Yes, that comes through very clearly in reading the papers and the minutes.

Pomeroy: Yes.

Working with Volunteers

Morris: So your work was with volunteers rather than directly in contact with donors?

Pomeroy: Yes, it was with volunteers. The way in which the campaign was organized that year, there was a commerce and industry division and within the commerce and industry division were probably half a

dozen different sections that dealt with--there were the retail department stores and there were small businesses which were in another little area by itself.

We were responsible for getting together all of the information that had to be collated to give to the volunteers who were going to do the solicitations, the preparation of the kits that we would deliver to them. In those days, a solicitor would take approximately twenty-five medium-sized firms. We probably had a unit, a section, that had twenty-five solicitors in it and we would prepare all of their material. When the chairman would want a meeting called of all of his solicitors we would be responsible for getting the notices out for the meetings and preparing the material for the conduct of the meeting and the training. We had to be familiar with all of the material in the kit so we could go through it for the volunteers and describe to them what they had and what they were supposed to do with it. Then we would be doing all of the follow-up work with the same volunteers, calling them to find out why we hadn't gotten some of their report cards back and so on and so on.

Then the other thing that happens during the campaign--in those days much more than it does now--are report luncheons, and there were report luncheons every week. Pretty soon it became apparent that I was pretty good at arranging things. So in addition to what I was doing with my chairman--

Morris: In your own section?

Pomeroy: In my own section, I was sort of co-opted to help in some of these luncheon arrangements. By the time of the second campaign, I was staging the report luncheons.

Morris: For the whole operation?

Pomeroy: Yes, for the whole operation. I wasn't staging them. I was working with the PR department in representing the campaign department in all of the arrangements.

Morris: The San Francisco Federated Fund at that point was just raising money from the San Francisco community and all of the money was then being allocated to San Francisco agencies?

Pomeroy: Yes, and I had nothing to do with the allocation process that first year. By the next year, we had the [United] Bay Area Crusade [UBAC].

Morris: The volunteers, were they primarily men from the business community?

- Pomeroy: Yes, yes. They had been recruited by the time I appeared on the scene.
- Morris: Tell me about what appealed to you about working with volunteers.
- Pomeroy: That was probably sparked during World War II during the housing job that I did because we were organizing, and I became more and more impressed with the potential that a group of volunteers had. Any time you got people who did not have strong personal interest or gain involved in something, when you got them working in it because they believed that this was a useful thing to do, you've got a different kind of spirit and you've got a very different approach than the people that were being paid to do things. That idea came out of the experience of organizing war housing committees in various communities. [Repetitious passage deleted]
- Morris: In San Francisco was there an adequate turnout of volunteers at this point to contact everybody in the Federated Fund campaign drive?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, the mobilization of volunteers was--all of the tradition that had been built up with Community Chest, I think in San Francisco was very strong.
- Morris: It went back to the twenties.
- Pomeroy: Yes, and there appeared to be very little problem in recruiting volunteers and this was true on through the years when UBAC was organized.
- Morris: Did they come in already understanding the role of the Fund and the Chest and convinced that this area-wide campaign was a good thing to happen?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, because there had always been apparently--and, remember, I was just learning about it in 1954--there had been good support from business. The Chamber of Commerce was supportive, the Downtown Association was supportive, the retail merchants' organizations, were very supportive of this one gift for all. It was an illusion, but they were very supportive of it.
- Morris: Why do you say it was an illusion?
- Pomeroy: Because even from the very beginning there were some charitable organizations that were not included in the Community Chest, and there were others who didn't feel they got enough money from the Community Chest and so they did sideways approaches to some

merchants and so on. But basically the concept of united giving was a strong one in San Francisco, and I think continues to be. That's my impression.

Organizing the United Bay Area Crusade

Morris: You said by the second year you did get involved in the allocation process.

Pomeroy: No, not that quickly. First of all, I was hired for a temporary job. Then by about December, it was decided that they needed to have somebody on the staff to serve as an assistant or an aide to Frederic B. Whitman who was the chairman of the organizing committee for what became the United Bay Area Crusade. Mr. Whitman was the president of the Western Pacific Railroad. He was a very, very bright, energetic, commanding kind of a person. He said to Chuck Isaacs, I guess, that he wanted somebody on the staff that he could call up and that person would make appointments for him, would do things for him. Chuck decided that I was the person who could do that.

So I, in effect, became the sort of handmaiden for the chairman of the organizing committee.

I think I remember the first meeting of the committee. No, that was when my mother died.

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Pomeroy: Every day for about a week, the doctor had been saying that he did not believe that she could live another twenty-four hours, so I had stayed there. Finally, the night before the first meeting was to be held, I had decided that I should come back up to San Francisco and be here for at least that meeting because I had been fairly closely involved. I thought my future was also linked with it to some extent. The doctor said, "Yes, I think you should go. I think your mother could die within the next hour, or she could last another week."

So I got on the plane and came up and when I got to my house on Telegraph Hill, I called Hollywood and my mother had just died. So I went out and got back on the plane and went down south. So I was not at that first meeting.

The organizing committee had decided that it was important to bring somebody in from the outside. I think this was an interesting development--because you had the director of the Community Chest in Oakland, whose name was Al Wardley, you had the director of the Community Chest in San Francisco, Harold Winey, and the two of them were like cats and dogs. So a man by the name of Ralph Shaw, who had done the original study as a professional consultant, advised the organizing committee to consider bringing in somebody from the outside to head up this new enterprise.

They had interviewed many people, I understand, and the man they engaged was Raymond E. Baarts, who had been with the Sloan-Kettering Institute in New York, but had a prior record of experience. Saginaw, Michigan was one place, I remember, where he had been director of a community chest, and he turned out to be, in my view at least, an ideal man for the job. He was gentle, gracious, with a good head, and very thorough. I fell rather quickly into a role of serving as his executive assistant, and I did that for all of that first year.

Morris: The chronology there is you served as director of agency relations until 1958. It doesn't show--

Pomeroy: It doesn't show executive assistant.

Morris: You've got '54 to '58 sort of all blocked together, which makes sense on a resume.

Pomeroy: Let's see, '54 and early '55 was the campaign and with Whitman and then probably I had a year there as Baart's executive assistant. Then it became apparent that there was going to be an agency relations job, because we were beginning to talk about allocations. The first year, the funds had simply been distributed to the participating community chests, distributed very much on the basis of what they had raised the preceding year. However, we began to build the whole allocations process.

Morris: Could we go back a minute? Frederic Whitman interests me both as somebody who turns up in the story of San Francisco community life and also as a kind of example of what kind of a businessman will take time from his business world for running this kind of an organization. I guess the other part of that is how much time do they actually spend and how much is your work actually with the people in that spot?

Pomeroy: Certainly, in the undertaking that Fred Whitman took on--and I never talked with him about what his motivation was for it, but I did piece it together a little bit. He had come to San Francisco from Lincoln, Nebraska in 1948. The point is that he was not a

part of the early San Francisco community structure that gave leadership to this new enterprise. He was a new kid on the block and he came as executive vice president of Western Pacific Railroad. He became president in July of 1949. So he had been president for a number of years, five or six years.

My view is that this was a way in which he could make a contribution. He had become active. He was a director of the Rosenberg Foundation. He was a member of the National Industrial Conference Board. He was an overseer of Harvard College. But he had not established himself as a community leader in San Francisco philanthropic activities. So I think he made a considered judgment decision to take on this role when, I am sure, he was encouraged by other leadership in the community. But here was a very dynamic, impressive figure, and he devoted a great deal of time to it. I think I would not be wrong if I said that he averaged probably ten hours a week easily in that first year of the organization of the Bay Area Crusade.

Morris: He didn't come in at the top level, I assume. He paid his dues in other capacities?

Pomeroy: Certainly he had been involved with the San Francisco Federated Fund. He may have at one point been a campaign chairman. That I don't remember, I don't know, and, lord help us, the records have not been kept and it's tragic.

Morris: From your observation, is it important in San Francisco to be a part of the group that runs the philanthropic--

Pomeroy: That runs the philanthropic enterprises? Yes; I think that it probably does not have the same kind of importance today that it had twenty-five years ago, but I am pleased to see that the leadership continues to bring a lot of pressure to bear on corporate management in the major companies, to serve in the campaign and in the governing leadership of the Bay Area United Way. I think the great differences between now and twenty-five years ago are two. One, it's no longer just San Francisco. It is truly Bay Area. Second, even the San Francisco portion of it is no longer made up from the families that have been involved in this sort of thing for all of their lives, like nearly seventy-five years or so.

We have just lots and lots of corporate leadership that has come here from elsewhere. The last home-grown family--I think I am right about this--that has had leadership in the Crusade and in the campaign was when Peter Haas was campaign chairman in 1979 and then he became president of United Way and then chairman of the board; I think that is the last sort of family legacy.

- Pomeroy: Bob Grohman, who is president of Levi Strauss now, came here from somewhere else, I don't know where--BVD underwear people, manufactured probably in Cleveland. The bank people are all executives who have come from other banking worlds. Dick Cooley came from Texas. I guess Samuel Armacoast is home grown, but I don't know that.
- Morris: Over the years, has that group which runs San Francisco philanthropy, are they choosy about who they invite into the club, as it were?
- Pomeroy: You have to distinguish between United Way and other philanthropies. For the United Way they pretty much seem to use all of their energy and effort to bring the top leadership from companies in. It is only if somebody appears to be really goofing off and not rolling up their sleeves and getting into it that there is a tendency to shove them aside and say, "We won't have anyone who is not going to work."
- Morris: Do you see a kind of a hierarchy, and I don't mean this necessarily socially? I am thinking of it organizationally, that you move sort of up the ladder from organizations of a more general appeal and a lower organizational intensity maybe.
- Pomeroy: I don't see any great indication of that. It would be interesting sometime to ask Joe Valentine, the executive director of the United Way, what his impression is about that. I see the United Way using its major donors as the pot from which they draw their leadership. After all, if Standard Oil is going to contribute half a million dollars to a twenty million dollar campaign, then you really have a right to go and say, "You have got a big investment in this and now you better just make sure that one of your top people gets into the line of succession here." That they have developed. They have about four or five jobs that lead toward becoming vice chairman of the campaign, then campaign chairman, then president-elect and president and then chairman of the board. There is about a five-year span of service.
- Morris: Of orientation and training?
- Pomeroy: Yes.
- Morris: Was that kind of organizational sophistication evident when the first UBAC was being set up?
- Pomeroy: No, it was not. But this was one of Ray Baarts's contributions. The design that he laid out stressed the great importance of developing leadership so that it would progress from job to job.

Morris: Five years is a long commitment to make if you are also running a bank or a railroad.

Pomeroy: But the major time factor involved is the year that somebody serves as campaign chairman. That's the year that he has got to be prepared to devote a significant amount of time. By having this succession process, it enables a man to plan in his own business operation. For example, if he knows that he is going to be campaign chairman in 1985, he does not take on the Chamber of Commerce job. He does not take on other things in the community that he may be asked to do, knowing that in 1985 he has got to be prepared to make that a major time commitment. It seems to work fairly well. Of course, every once in a while they run into somebody who has problems and they try to back out and that creates some serious difficulties.

Morris: A big hole in the Crusade operation.

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: They also presumably have to coordinate that with not opening a large branch operation in their business connections.

Pomeroy: Exactly. Of course, in major corporations, that kind of planning occasionally goes in three to five year segments so that I think it has worked fairly well. That's my impression.

Strategies for an Areawide Organization

Morris: So Ray Baarts came in charged with the responsibility to develop this kind of long-range--

Pomeroy: Ray Baarts came in accepting all of the executive responsibility for the newborn United Bay Area Crusade with offices in five counties. We still had a separate United Community Fund in San Francisco and they had separate united funds in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, and San Mateo Counties. There were five separate offices and a Bay Area Crusade headquarters.

Morris: Was Whitman primarily the architect of getting those five county organizations to give up some of their autonomy and pool their--?

Pomeroy: He was not the architect, I don't think, but he was the executive. Ralph Shaw, the professional consultant, who at one time had been director of the Alameda County United Fund; did the study and made the recommendations. I think that Whitman was then active with

the San Francisco Fund. But there were a number of other people who were involved and supportive. Sam Stewart was then vice president of the Bank of America and he was a member of the organizing committee, which included about twenty-five people from all five counties.

They had been going on for a good year before I became involved. What Whitman was doing as chairman of that committee was wrapping up the final agreements from all of these five counties.

Morris: This may be the place to read you a quote from a very interesting letter that I came across that Ray Baarts wrote to Steve Nelson after he had retired. He was speaking about the community strategies and coalitions that were put together--[reading] "the strategies and kinds of citizen coalitions that were used to achieve this area approach to administering funds to such a variety of agencies." Now, he wrote that in 1969 and it sort of rang in my head as referring back over this whole span of fifteen years, I guess.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, clearly. Yes, because it took a variety of coalitions. The labor representation and labor forces had been far more involved and active in the East Bay on a broader basis than they were in San Francisco. In San Francisco, the labor council in the person of George Johns had been a participant in the organizing process. But George was violently opposed to, and represented this as the viewpoint of organized labor, payroll-deduction plans for employees because I assume he felt this impinged on the labor dues deduction. He was very opposed to the setting of any kind of guidelines for giving--one day's pay a month or whatever. He violently objected to that and he also, without ever being able to put his finger closely on it, resented the domination of the business community.

Morris: That would be sort of constitutional!

Pomeroy: He couldn't pinpoint the precise reasons that he didn't like this domination, but he knew he didn't like it. I still remember very vividly a meeting between some representatives of--I wish I could clearly remember the context in which this meeting was held, but I can remember Adrien Falk, who was a marvelous, dear old man who was an inspired community leader of the old school, getting into a controversy with George Johns and George swearing publicly at Adrian Falk, and Adrian Falk drawing himself up and walking out of the room and other people chastising George and calling him a so and so to do that to a gentleman who has given as much to this community as Adrian Falk has.

- Morris: In that period, in the fifties, was it still an uncomfortable situation to have a labor person in the midst of these corporate fellows doing good together?
- Pomeroy: No, by this time the corporate world was willing to recognize that they needed labor involved. Any time you are going to have an employee campaign, you need the encouragement and support of their labor representatives, their union. So they were accepting of it. The people hated George because George was impossible. He was arrogant. He had no grace at all. John Crowley, his successor, had a great deal of grace and would behave not necessarily with a very different viewpoint, but always carried it forward with dignity and grace. George was a very unfortunate representative of labor during that period in my view and I had him on my board--whew!
- Morris: He turns up on all kinds of committees and boards and things like that.
- Pomeroy: Sure.
- Morris: Did you ever talk to him about how he got to be labor's man for community good works?
- Pomeroy: He got there only by being secretary of the labor council. Obviously his arrival at the position he held in the councils of labor was not because he was the community's favorite person. It was because he had obviously represented them. I can't remember what union he came out of, but it was not the Teamsters which was the big, controlling--Jack Goldberger was the Teamster man and was far more welcome on committees and boards than was George.
- Morris: So John's service may have been out of his view of the union's self-interest rather than concern for--
- Pomeroy: The community, oh, yes; totally, totally.
- Morris: What other kinds of accommodations were needed to bring off--?
- Pomeroy: There were certainly the accommodations that had to be made between the Jewish community, the Roman Catholic community, and the Protestant community, let's say. I am thinking of the Salvation Army and the Volunteers of America and a variety of nonsectarian agencies that still had some religious connotation.
- Morris: Agencies rather than the churches per se?
- Pomeroy: Oh, the Jewish Welfare Federation, Catholic charities, yes, indeed.

Patterns of Giving

Pomeroy: I'm sure you have heard the old, old story that they tell about the formation of the Community Chest in San Francisco, and that was that the Jews and the Episcopalians got together in order to give money to the Catholics. That was folklore when I first became involved in the community.

Morris: In later years, I think it's Dan Koshland in his oral history speaks rather firmly about talking to community leaders and saying, the Jewish leaders are not going to put any more money into whatever it was until the rest of the religious groups put up some money.*

Pomeroy: Exactly, and that has been a recurring theme, probably not said as clearly and almost as decisively as Dan may have said it because he was probably talking about a specific enterprise. But in general, as we worked on campaigns through the years, the Jewish leadership, which has always given at a very generous level in San Francisco either as individuals or as the heads of corporations when in fact they were, has said continuously, if you could get the rest of the community to give at the same level we're giving, you would have a much stronger and more adequately funded campaign.

In my view this was a very legitimate, strong feeling on the part of Jewish leadership--the failure of non-Jewish wealthy individuals to give in a relatively generous fashion. The Catholics are particularly bad about it, I have to say this as a Roman Catholic. They give, some of them, very generously to the Catholic church and to Catholic institutions, their giving to the total community is modest. The Jewish leadership obviously resents this.

Morris: Have any of the people involved in this or you yourself ever thought about this as a cultural thing, what there is about the Jewish community and the Catholic community and the Protestant groups?

Pomeroy: The thoughts that I have had about it, and I have come to know the Jewish community probably as well as any non-Jew in the community because I came to them against this background of working with

*Daniel E. Koshland, Sr., The Principle of Sharing, Regional Oral History Office, Berkeley, 1971.

Jewish refugees with a lot of interest, a lot of empathy, a lot of feeling about Israel and Zionism. When I make the comparison between what people in the Jewish community do and what people in--and I'll take the Catholic community because I am a part of that and I can speak about that with more knowledge--and that is that as a part of their cultural legacy, Jewish people have always given generously to community causes. Part of it in this area is that they have succeeded economically more than--

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Pomeroy: --the Catholics by and large. So you have educated Jews making money versus Catholic Irish with less education and therefore making less money. The two things sort of go hand in hand. So the Jews have had it to give. The Catholics have not had it to give. The Catholics have had the additional pressure of giving to their church whatever they had to a degree greater than I think the Jews have had, until you get to the support of Zionism and then, of course, the support of Israel has placed great demands.

County Sensibilities; Professional Resistance

Morris: The other aspect of these accommodations, in terms of putting together an area-wide thing, is the various counties.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, the geographic factors. Marin County was viewed as a dependency of San Francisco. It was the bedroom of San Francisco. So was San Mateo County, but to a lesser degree because the Peninsula was already beginning--the deep Peninsula--was already beginning to burgeon a little bit. So San Mateo sort of had its interests in two places. A lot of people from the San Mateo community, who worked in the city, were part of the structure. But an increasing number were becoming a part of the deep Peninsula interests--the San Jose/Palo Alto axis.

Alameda County gave every indication that it was quite sure it was going to be raped in the process of becoming part of a Bay Area effort.

Morris: Sort of an extension of Oakland's feeling that San Francisco has always outshone it?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. But I don't think that the lay leadership over there would have been nearly as concerned about this if the concern hadn't been generated by some of the professional staff. I think

the professional staff saw themselves as becoming smaller fish in a larger pond than they had been when they were the professional staff for the community chest.

Contra Costa County was an interesting addition to the Bay Area complex because it really had very little relation to anything. You had Richmond with its social problems and its social agencies and then you have an enormous spread of county with little agencies dotted around in different places doing different things. There were at one time three community chests in Contra Costa County. So it has always been difficult to get leadership that in any way represented the total county.

Morris: You've got the contrast not only of Richmond which by '54 had dealt with a large minority influx and large shipyards and all that, but then over on the other side you've got Lafayette and Moraga and areas which are both San Francisco bedroom communities and relatively wealthy.

Pomeroy: Yes, you had east Contra Costa, west Contra Costa, and central Contra Costa. You could have had three counties out there.

Morris: What about Santa Clara County?

Pomeroy: Santa Clara County was never included in the concept for a Bay Area Crusade. I shouldn't say it was never included. I think that it may have been included in the initial thinking, but San Jose dominated Santa Clara County's interests, San Jose was already beginning to feel that it was going to be bigger than San Francisco, as indeed it is. So early on, I think, they excluded themselves, I'm sure.

Morris: To what extent was the design a reflection of a sense of growing professionalism amongst the professionals?

Pomeroy: I think the design reflected the really farsightedness of one individual and that was Ralph Shaw. I think when it was laid out for the Fred Whitmans, the Sam Stewarts, the old Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, (those people were still active in San Francisco and they lent their support to the concept of a Bay Area undertaking). I think that it was much more the recognition on the part of business leadership that this was a desirable way to go and I think the professionals--I don't think Harold Winey, who was the top professional in the San Francisco community chest, wanted it at all. I think he was opposed to it. He saw it as a surrendering of San Francisco's autonomy over the welfare of its own agencies.

Al Wardley, the top professional for Alameda County, saw it as a submersion of Alameda County's interests to those of San Francisco. The other professionals around the Bay were not of stature either to give leadership or to present opposition.

Morris: [Shaw wrote the original report that led to five county unification, and Ray Baarts put the idea into operation some years later.] Would Baarts and Shaw have known each other through the professional associations or gone to school together or anything?

Pomeroy: I think not. It is my recollection that it was a brand-new acquaintanceship. Ralph was very wise. Having been the architect of this, he decided early on that once this was set up, he didn't want to be a part of it, and he moved as far away as you could get and still be in California. He went to San Diego where he ran the United Community Fund down there.

Morris: Why did he not wish to implement his own brainchild?

Pomeroy: It was going to be much too tough a job and he didn't want to deal with those personalities. He was very smart, really a very astute guy. He didn't want to get into a fight and if he had been selected, it would have been a running battle.

Morris: Because he knew all the players and the players didn't particularly like him?

Pomeroy: They had no basis for disliking Baarts because they didn't know anything about him. I thought Shaw was very smart. He was around for awhile, but definitely wanted no part of getting into the middle of this thing once it got going.

Morris: Because he thought it was going to be a contentious--?

Pomeroy: I don't think so. I just think he had a theory that he had designed it and wanted to let other people work on making it work.

Morris: Okay, we'll leave it at that. That's an interesting concept in itself. From your spot as executive assistant to Ray Baarts when he came in and being in at the beginning, as they say, did people have the sense that it was going to take as long as it did to bring about a full integration of all of the--

Anticipating Problems and Implementation

- Pomeroy: Ray certainly did. This is when I very early on developed great admiration for his perceptions, because he saw the job that would have to be done in integrating each of these counties into a total operation as one that was going to take a good deal of time, that people would have to work through their provincial concerns and come to accept the values that were involved in the larger organization as being sufficient to justify giving up some of their local controls and local concerns.
- Morris: This goes on until the establishment of the United Way?
- Pomeroy: We brought about mergers of various funds into UBAC. The merger of the United Community Fund into UBAC--I think it may have been 1960. Was it?
- Morris: [refers to notes] Nineteen-sixty-six is full unification of budget and allocation. There was a budget review committee established for multiple county-wide agencies. Then in '64 there is another overall evaluation.
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, that led to the creation of the Bay Area Social Planning Council. But the corporate merger process didn't happen until 1966, and they were all accomplished at about the same time. So what you had was better than a ten-year period that it took to weld together strong enough lay participation.
- Morris: And various interim reorganizations or steps along the way.
- Pomeroy: Yes. It's twenty minutes after twelve, a quarter after twelve.
- Morris: I did want to lay this as groundwork. It took me several hours of reading just to realize all that had happened. At first look, it looks like a period of continual turmoil. But then when we were talking initially, you and I, about doing the interview you said that you thought it was a relatively stable period in which a number of things were happening on a continuing--
- Pomeroy: Yes, I think that as I look back on this now, I see a number of things that moved forward in spite of some of the personality differences. There was a man in San Mateo by the name of Ros [Roswell] E. Caulk who had been director of the San Mateo United Fund, there was Al Wardley in the East Bay, there was a man by the name of Al Williams in Contra Costa County, and they didn't really like what they saw happening. But looking back on it now, they didn't put any serious barriers in the way. Caulk kept some of his

volunteers stirred up and so did Wardley to some extent. But they didn't have a lasting effect. So you look on it as an evolving process in a very widely differing community. You had very different populations in all five of those counties. It is, to me, very interesting to look back on it.

Morris: Yes, and to have it in the framework that you set up with Ralph Shaw's report at the beginning and then coming through these steps to a full five county corporate unification.

XIII SAN FRANCISCO UNITED COMMUNITY FUND, 1957-1966

[Interview #8: July 14, 1982]##

Agency Relations; Continuing and Changing Needs

[In preparation for this session, Mrs. Pomeroy had been sent UCF membership committee minutes for January 4 and 23, 1961, dealing with agency membership and funding.* The opening question asked about the relationship between existing member agencies and agencies seeking membership and whether funding was ever terminated for a member agency.]

Pomeroy: On this whole question of whether or not an agency should ever be terminated, they used to cite almost with glee that the only agency that any of the people then on the board could remember having been terminated was the Fruit and Flower Mission--the Fruit and Flower Mission was an agency that had grown up out of some volunteer effort to take fruit and flowers to people in hospitals and had eventually become a community chest agency. It continued rather well past its legitimate lease on life. But finally a very courageous board of directors terminated it and said that there no longer appeared to be a need for that particular service in the community.

That termination probably occurred during the Depression when there were other, more pressing things to be dealt with. But questions about the Italian Welfare Agency and the Chinese Hospital arose because both agencies were viewed as being less than

*See appendix.

modern in their approaches. The debate that went on, as you can see from these minutes, sort of revolved around (a) were they important community services and (b) were they being operated in such a manner that they deserved the community endorsement that United Fund funding--Crusade funding--gave them. Of course, in both cases the answer finally was, yes, we will keep them.

Morris: The point that interested me in the minutes was that there was a relationship between the agencies' involvement in the fund campaign and whether or not they were worthy.

Pomeroy: Absolutely, absolutely, and the feeling expressed by at least some of the people, particularly those who were involved in fund-raising, was that the efforts of people in the Italian community and the Chinese community were going to be directly affected by whether or not these agencies continued to be supported.

Morris: At that point, did each agency have an assignment in the fund campaign that "we expect you to raise X-number of dollars?"

Pomeroy: No, that's not the way that worked. The way it worked was that each agency that was a member of the United Community Fund was asked to enlist volunteers from their boards and their membership in the campaigns, but there was no setting of a quota to be raised by a given agency; it was their volunteers, the involvement of their volunteers in the fundraising process. The other factor that was taken into consideration was that the listing--the inclusion of--a specialized agency in the list of agencies that are participating in the campaign probably accounted for some of the giving by some ethnic groups--i.e., Italians and Chinese in this case.

Morris: The minutes made a comment that these were agencies representing the two largest ethnic groups in San Francisco and that in the foreseeable future one could presume that there would be a decreasing need for their services. Does that reflect a changing population in San Francisco or changing ideas in the kinds of community services?

Pomeroy: I don't know. I don't think I know the answer to that question.

Morris: This in the minutes of January 4, 1961, "probably eventually need for United Community Fund support for them would disappear." It's on page 3.

Pomeroy: I read that and I wondered why that was--I couldn't rationalize that.

Morris: Looking at it with hindsight, the early sixties is when we began to become much more aware of black and Chicano groups in the city.

Pomeroy: Now I know why that remark was made. The Italian Welfare Agency over the years had disbursed small emergency grants--funds--to people in need, and the presumption was that as the public system became better equipped to deal with emergency needs, which of course has never happened, that the need for that kind of direct, somewhat personalized cash assistance would be eliminated. In the case of the Chinese Hospital, what has finally come about is what probably was in the minds of whoever made that comment; that is that San Francisco General has had to make provision for Chinese language people working in the hospital--doctors, nurses, orderlies, and corps people because of the substantial Chinese population that is using that community resource. I think one has to read into this the assumption that we are moving toward a more perfect world! [laughs]

Morris: Is that idea one that was prevalent in the period when you were executive of the United Community Fund?

Pomeroy: Direct cash services or equivalent services were, in fact, clearly identified by this time as a part of the publicly funded program and there was an increasing reluctance [to fund them privately]. The only area in which it was perfectly clear that everybody recognized the need for continuing emergency services were with travelers and with children--abandoned children--and that sort of thing.

Morris: And that that would continue to be a United Community Fund responsibility rather than some public agency?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: How much of your work as executive and your board's work was involved with discussions with public agencies--say the San Francisco General Hospital--on this kind of--

Pomeroy: Through our Social Planning Committee and through the councils of the Social Planning Committee, specifically the health council with respect to the hospital, and the Social Service Department with respect to the family and children's council, there were ongoing continuing conversations. We viewed the Social Planning Committee as the very strong arm of community leadership that had the potential for a real impact on public bodies when it was necessary and it worked that way, in my opinion.

Morris: That was one of the kinds of things that you expected of your board members and your committee members?

Pomeroy: And particularly the Social Planning Committee. Then when we really got into any kind of a crunch--for example, if there was a hearing before the board of supervisors or the Social Service Commission that seemed to be important to have the views of the private sector reflected--we would ask the chairman of the Social Planning Committee and possibly the chairman of the board to go and make themselves heard.

Appointment as UCF Executive; Staff Relationships

Morris: Let's back up a minute. Last time we were talking about the broad, overall trends that were affecting the various organizations and reorganizations in United Community Fund. We didn't really get you aboard there. We talked about it off tape, but I wondered if we could go back a little bit. When you were appointed as an executive, were there any questions either about a woman in that sizable job or about the need for a professional socialworker credential?

Pomeroy: Now, I have to give you my impression about this based on conversations with members of the selection committee that recommended me to the board of the United Community Fund. My impression is that there was a concern on the part of the lay leadership in the community that what the United Community Fund needed was some very good management and that there were enough competent and qualified socialworkers involved, so that the person who headed it did not have to be a social worker.

There was a very strong feeling that came back to me through the grapevine on the part of the staff of the United Community Fund that they deeply resented having an administrator appointed who was not a socialworker.

Morris: How did you deal with that?

Pomeroy: I met it absolutely head on. It was reported to me prior to the time I went up to take over the office that some of the staff were contemplating resignations. So my first act was to have a staff meeting of the entire staff and to say to them simply that I felt deeply honored to be offered the opportunity to do this job, that to me it was one of the most important jobs in the private sector in San Francisco, that it would have every ounce of experience and energy and intelligence that I could bring to it; and that I ask only one thing, that I was entirely prepared to accept every person in that room exactly as they are with all of their viewpoints,

all of their biases, all of their prejudice, all of their virtues, and I asked that they do the same thing with me, and that was all. It apparently took the recalcitrants somewhat by surprise.

Morris: That was a new--?

Pomeroy: That was a totally new approach to them and it seemed to work because I had no resignations.

Morris: Had you tried that kind of approach before or had you gone to somebody for advice on how to deal with what could be a very sticky situation?

Pomeroy: No, that was a direct outgrowth of my experience in AA, the whole AA principle of I accept you as you are and I hope you are going to accept me as I am and that this is how we come to terms with ourselves and with each other.

Morris: Was this maybe the first time that you had tried this kind of a principle outside of the AA sector?

Pomeroy: Not necessarily, but it was certainly the most significant, major experience in which I brought that training and that life experience to bear. I started with the San Francisco Federated Fund in July of 1954. I had been on the scene since mid-'54 and this was April of '58, so that I had in the years working with UBAC and helping in the development of that and working in the campaign, I had been learning how to use these principles. But this was rather, to my way of thinking, the most dramatic use to which I had been able to put it.

Morris: I should say. Was there sort of a testing period?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, I would say that the first six to eight months of my tenure at the United Community Fund was a real testing period.

Eva Hance, whom I had known for many years, had already reached retirement age. She had about made up her mind that she did not want to continue after I was appointed. But I made a very strong plea to her to continue as the director of social planning for at least a year past her retirement age because I so firmly believed that the social planning responsibility was of such significance. My feeling--and obviously I developed this philosophy about it over a period of time--but my feeling about fund-raising was that you couldn't justify a fund campaign, you couldn't sell it to the community, unless you had a very firm base of social planning to relate to the way the money was being spent.

Because I was as convinced about that as I was and because social planning did not exist to the same degree in the other UBAC counties, I was able to persuade Eva that I thought she would be making a particularly significant contribution in terms of the way in which social planning would be regarded by UBAC if we were able to maintain that strength in San Francisco, and to some extent I think that proved to be true.

She did agree to stay. We then undertook recruitment, and with her help and her advice, and with the chairman of the Social Planning Committee as an active participant in the interview process, we recruited David deMarche as the director of social planning to succeed Eva. I would guess that he came on probably in May of 1959.

Morris: Was he a San Franciscan?

Pomeroy: No, he was not. He had been a participant in a national mental health study.* He had worked with Wayne McMillan. Wayne by this time had returned to the Bay Area, was living in Oakland. He was a person for whom Eva had great respect. I had not known Wayne prior to the time he settled here, but he had a national reputation. I think it was probably he who brought David to our attention. Then there were other people who had known--oh dear, somebody in southern California--H.A.R. Carleton, who had known David earlier because David had been in Los Angeles and he had been with the YMCA; I'm not sure. But he was known to southern Californian people, too.

Board and Committment to Regional Organization

Morris: Maybe briefly you could talk about working with the board and what kinds of interests they had and how you developed your relations with them as an executive.

Pomeroy: The board of the United Community Fund was made up of a number of people with whom I had been working in one capacity or another through the development of UBAC and the conduct of the UBAC campaign.

*by the Federal National Institute for Mental Illness and Health. See final report of the commission, Action for Mental Health, New York, Basic Books, 1961.

Harold Winey had been executive of Community Chest for some time and was the executive of the United Community Fund. The San Francisco Federated Fund was the fundraising arm of the Community Fund. Harold Winey had been openly and fairly aggressively opposed to the organization of UBAC. I would say that the primary motive on the part of the board for making that change and requesting Harold's resignation was to bring the staff leadership of the Community Fund into a compatible relationship with the lay leadership who were committed to the organization of the Bay Area Crusade.

Morris: And were committed to progress and change.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Morris: That's interesting that it was the board's combined wisdom that was encouraging this. What was there about the board leadership, who were the strong people who had formulated this idea?

Pomeroy: The chairman of the board at that time was Fred Merrill, chairman of the board of the Fireman's Fund. Very active on the board are people like Selah Chamberlain, Jr., Mrs. Robert Watt Miller, Mrs. Stanley Whittaker, Frank Sloss, representatives of a number of the major corporations. It was W.W. Davidson from Standard Oil. It was Samuel B. Stewart from Bank of America. These same people had responded to the leadership of Frederic B. Whitman in the organization of UBAC. They had maintained their involvement, their participation in the San Francisco operations, and at the same time had devoted a lot of time and energy to the UBAC organizing process.

Morris: So there was a fair amount of overlap in board membership?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. This was very much a part of the scheme as Fred Whitman saw it. That was, to make this thing go it had to have the involvement in the Bay Area structure of people from each of the county funds that were involved, or community chest or whatever they were known as.

Morris: Were there some of these people with whom you were comfortable enough that you would go to them for advice and the two of you or the group of you together would--?

Pomeroy: Strategize? Very much so, Frank Sloss particularly on the social planning side. He was a member of both the Social Planning Committee and the board of the Community Fund. I felt very comfort-

able with him. It was he who ultimately became the leader of a UBAC committee that devoted itself to planning for Bay Area social planning.

Morris: I came across a couple of comments attributed to Mr. Sloss that indicated some resistance to the idea of San Francisco losing its autonomy.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, on the social planning side there was a real fear. And let it be said that Harold Winey in his resistance to a Bay Area fundraising organization was not alone. He had some volunteer support, but it was not the majority support of the San Francisco board which, as I say, is what brought about the change, I believe.

Morris: Did the selection committee talk to you about your views on change and specifically this idea of developing a Bay Area concept?

Pomeroy: I was clearly involved in it, because I had been first a sort of an administrative assistant for Fred Whitman and then became the executive assistant for Ray Baarts when he was appointed the director of UBAC. So my participation, my involvement, was clearly identified, at the time the selection committee looked at me, with the whole process and with a total commitment really to UBAC.

Morris: Did that philosophical difference between you and Mr. Winey cause you some problems later on when you were executive of the fund?

Pomeroy: No, because Harold just disappeared. He went to work for the Salvation Army doing a planning job.

Squabbles about UBAC Funds Allocation

Morris: It looked as if you sort of inherited or walked into some major turmoils. You became executive in April of '58, and in May and June, in the minutes, it looked like there were some problems between San Francisco and other Bay Area counties on the division of the funds raised. In May there was a report that San Francisco was subsidizing other counties to the tune of about \$238,000 a year by funding thirty-three agencies that served a number of counties. Then in June, San Mateo County went to UBAC urgently requesting that the 1958 allocation for San Francisco be decreased due to gross problems in the other four counties.

Pomeroy: That was the handiwork of one Roswell Caulk who was the executive director of the United Fund in San Mateo County. Together with Al Wardley of Alameda County, he became sort of his majesty's loyal opposition in terms of San Francisco's participation. San Francisco took the position that it had always raised proportionately a great deal more money than had any of the other counties. There was recognition on the part of the San Francisco volunteers that there were going to be adjustments made, but in their minds they were going to be made carefully and gradually. They were going to be made as the result of raising more money and not on the basis of decreasing the allocations to San Francisco agencies in order to bring up the standard or the level of support for agencies in the other counties.

Morris: Was some of it that some agencies with headquarters in San Francisco were funded by the San Francisco operation and then used some of the money in outlying counties?

Pomeroy: My recollection is that the agencies that were headquartered in San Francisco had applied to and become members of all of the other united funds, too. I am pretty sure that was right. That certainly was true with respect to the Ys, the Salvation Army, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls. They were participants in each of the other counties.

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Pomeroy: UBAC was suggesting that each county fund would subtract the amount of money those same agencies had been receiving in each of the five counties and make them a Bay Area grant. That was almost the first effort of UBAC to do Bay-wide budgeting.

Morris: The view was that it could only work if there were increases in the amount of money that was raised by all five counties?

Pomeroy: That particular process was not dependent on the raising of additional money, but it was generally recognized that the level of support for most services had always been higher in San Francisco, and there was a lot of documentation to prove this. In other words, per capita support for agencies was higher in San Francisco than it was anywhere else.

What the--particularly Alameda and San Mateo counties, led by these two energetic gentlemen--wanted to do was to begin to see a shift and improvement in the level of support in the other counties by pulling down San Francisco. San Francisco said, "No, that is a game we will not play, but we will go to any lengths to raise

more money and that new money can always be shared on a disproportionate basis with the counties where the levels of support have been lower." That was the early philosophy.

Morris: Was part of this process and part of the hassling going on because of changes in San Mateo County and Alameda County and Contra Costa County?

Pomeroy: Increasing needs, sure, and increasing population; legitimate concerns, but to be met by--

The one factor that the other counties had on their side was that major corporations with interest in more than one county, not necessarily all five counties but at least two counties, had traditionally made their gift to United Crusade in the headquarter city. So, for example, you might have the Bank of America making a \$100,000 gift; we probably could identify that it represented \$5,000 that had come from the community chest in Walnut Creek and another \$5,000 from Richmond and maybe \$10,000 from San Mateo County and maybe \$20,000 from Alameda County.

Morris: Bank of America branches in those places?

Pomeroy: Yes, that the Bank of America Foundation had given to the community chest in those areas in recognition of their activities there, but proportionately they had been far more generous with the headquarter city, San Francisco, and it happened with the telephone companies, Standard Oil, the major banks. I can't remember what the other significant corporations were, but there were a number of them. Now, in reverse, the same thing happened in Alameda County where Kaiser had supported the Alameda County United Fund very generously and only made a token contribution to San Francisco.

Morris: Given what you have been saying about the number of top business executives on the boards of the various funds, when this became apparent you wonder that they didn't make some adjustment in terms of the company policy. Was that a possible avenue?

Pomeroy: I don't think they saw it as a possible avenue. I think by the time they had committed themselves to helping in the formation of UBAC, that seemed to them to be a far better solution than for them to make the individual judgments that would be necessary in five separate counties. They didn't want to do that and I don't blame them.

They would much rather make a block grant to a Bay Area Crusade and say, "Gentlemen, go to it. You do the distribution." As a matter of fact, that was a pretty rational way to approach it.

Morris: So that in effect made a business reason for this whole coordination?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, the pressures that were increasingly being brought to bear on major corporations around the bay had a great deal to do with stimulating the development of UBAC.

Fundraising Strategies and Budget Concerns

Morris: If there was this increase in population in the Bay Area, why was there kind of a plateau of gifts from about 1961 to '66?

Pomeroy: There are probably a number of opinions as to what the reasons might be. The business leadership in the community put the responsibility for that on the professional campaign organization and said, "You can't be doing the right kind of a job because look what Cleveland does, look what Chicago does, look what Detroit does." That ran through all of the campaign strategy, campaign-planning meetings really from the beginning of UBAC, having to do with trying to find the methods and the techniques that would bring the Bay Area up to a respectable level of participation when compared with other cities in what was called the Big Ten, the ten major cities in the country, campaign-wise.

Morris: What were they doing that wasn't being done in San Francisco?

Pomeroy: I don't think we ever found out.

Morris: I'm curious!

Pomeroy: A great deal of effort went into campaign studies. Ray Baarts, who in my experience is one of the most thoughtful, careful, executives, was not new to either community chest or united fundraising. He went to every meeting of the Big Ten and their campaign planning sessions and so on and brought back absolutely everything that was being tried anywhere.

I think we had some theories about it. The West generally was made up of much newer populations. This is true in Los Angeles, it's true in San Francisco, it's true in Portland, it's true in Seattle. These are people who have not grown up with the

same traditions of participation in community enterprises. There was more of it in San Francisco at the time I came here than I had seen in Los Angeles, which I also knew fairly well.

I think that the lack of comparable fundraising probably can be related to the lack of--it isn't an a homogenous population within the community. It's a constantly growing and changing population. I think that's probably been a major factor. Someday I want to talk with Joe Valentine [in 1982, executive of United Way of the Bay Area] to find out from him what his impressions are about what has happened, because in recent years this--

Morris: Has taken off?

Pomeroy: Has taken off and taken off with great success.

Morris: Was the fundraising generally related to the same people all of the time, the old reliables, or was it an education process?

Pomeroy: Every effort was made to bring new people in. One of the things that was happening at the same time that the Bay Area Crusade was developing was that the family leadership in a number of business enterprises was changing. The Crown-Zellerbach Corporation, which had been headed by J.B. and Harold Zellerbach was in the hands of professional managers. All of the Crocker interests, which had always been dominated by family, were now in the hands of professional managers. The Bank of America, which had A.P. Giannini's imprint all over it, had begun to feel the real impact of professional managers. Standard Oil Company had originally had some family interests but they were not visible any longer. PG&E had been C.O.G. Miller: Robert Watt Miller had moved out of that level and had gone into the stratosphere of the holding company--not even the holding company, a completely separate family interest.

Morris: Your comment about the professional managers in the business community is interesting because I came across several comments that said the problem was that there are too many professional fund managers. Now, is that a legitimate complaint?

Pomeroy: The comment that I heard very often was that the new professional managers that have begun to take over the corporate world in our city do not have the same feeling and commitment to this city that the family managers have. Therefore, we are not going to get the same support nor are we going to get the same leadership involvement from the professional managers that we got from family when they were running these institutions.

Morris: Okay, but they were also complaining about professional fundraising managers, that they were not doing the job they should be.

- Pomeroy: Yes, I think that's a common complaint. When volunteers are looking at something that doesn't seem to them to be working very well, the logical place to look, and this is not unreasonable, is have you got the best professional staff?
- Morris: Were they local people or had they been through the wars in community campaigns in other places?
- Pomeroy: [pause] I'm trying to think. What the people were talking about are the people who were the heads of the various community funds that made up UBAC and that was Wardley and Caulk, and Williams in Contra Costa County, and Winey who was gone, not because he wasn't competent but because he was not supportive of the Bay Area concept. The campaign staff leadership for UBAC started with Ray Baarts.
- Morris: He is the one who brought in new people specifically for fund-raising?
- Pomeroy: Yes.
- Morris: And these were people whose primary responsibility was planning and implementing the campaigns?
- Pomeroy: Yes.
- Morris: They weren't terribly involved in the social planning?
- Pomeroy: They were not deeply involved. We went through an annual wrestling match to see how many of the campaign staff people we could get help from in staffing budget committees because some of them had experience that would have qualified them to do that, but pretty legitimately their performance was being measured on the basis of the campaign, and they were not prepared to carve out parts of each week to work on staffing budget committees if their campaign was done separately.
- Morris: And it became a year-around process to plan--
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, absolutely, particularly when you are dealing with the geographic area of the five counties and you are dealing with, at that time, roughly a thousand companies and corporations. You are talking about individual residential campaigns. You were talking about the solicitation of major gifts, the thousand dollar and over gifts from all around five counties. The planning of the Normandy invasion was simple compared to trying to plan a campaign [laughs] because they didn't have to do the Normandy invasion with volunteers!

Morris: They didn't have to do it every year.

Pomeroy: [laughs] That's right, they did it once and they got it over with!

Dual Role: S.F. Fund Operations and Areawide Advance Gifts Campaign

Morris: In your spot as executive of one county's operation, how much of your time continued to be relating to the five-county fundraising campaign?

Pomeroy: I would say somewhere between twenty-five and fifty percent, and the reason was that I was Ray Baarts' choice to staff the advance gifts--special gifts--of the large individual donor group, which was a major undertaking.

Morris: For UBAC?

Pomeroy: For UBAC, the five counties around the bay. You do that with one hand while you are running an organization with another.

Morris: Was this the first time there had been a specific group working on the major gifts?

Pomeroy: No, each county had always had an advance gifts or special gifts section. It was my responsibility to pull it together and to pull together the volunteer leadership. That was the key, of course, to your special gifts, because you had to have the right people soliciting.

Morris: What were your favorite success stories as a volunteer?

Pomeroy: Interesting. [pause, short laugh] All that seems to come to mind at the moment are the rather dismal ones I don't wish to record. It's tough to match up the right volunteer to make the solicitation of the individual large gift. For example, the right person has got to go and ask Mrs. Davies. You just can't let somebody who would like to go and have tea with Mrs. [Ralph K.] Davies necessarily be the person who does the asking.

Obviously, the important thing is to have very careful and good records from year to year on who has been successful you just don't challenge success. We had an advance gifts committee that always had on it the key people in the campaign, people like Morty Fleishhacker, Sam Stewart, Fred Whitman, Walter Haas, Dan

Koshland, the people who really knew the individuals in the community and could and would know from both social and business relationships who could be the best solicitor.

Morris: Those are pretty well identified as major donors themselves.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, absolutely, and a cardinal rule is never send a volunteer to seek a ten thousand dollar gift who hasn't given ten thousand. Now, you can't always make it stick, but it is a cardinal rule.

Morris: Does that reach a point where somebody who gives \$10,000 to the activity of his choice is going to expect to be asked to tap other people for similar amounts?

Pomeroy: Yes, and depending on his or her level of commitment, they will either do it or not. There are some very generous people who would no more think of asking somebody else for a gift than fly. But certainly, when you are putting together a group of--we never called them solicitors, we called them members of the advance gifts committee--you never fail to see if you could get on the committee whoever the most generous donors were.

Morris: You started with last year's list of major donors?

Pomeroy: Oh, sure. Then, I guess, for me part of the excitement of serving as the staff director for advance gifts was to be able to work with outstanding community people. If they agreed to serve and were enthusiastic you felt there was a winning team. We all like to win! [phone interruption]

Some Notable Volunteers

Morris: Sam Stewart has emerged as the premier fundraiser in the seventies, certainly, with the [S.F.] Performing Arts Center [Davies Hall in San Francisco]. Was he that effective in the sixties when you were working with him?

Pomeroy: He sort of grew into it. He came to UBAC on the basis of his relationship with Clark Beise, who was then president of Bank of America, I guess.

Morris: Was Sam a local boy?

- Pomeroy: No, he came out of the New Deal administration where he had been general counsel for a Senate committee. Prior to that he had practiced law in New York. He came to the Bank of America probably as an associate general counsel and then moved up.
- Morris: Were there yet identifiable public affairs units in some of the local businesses that somebody like Stewart would be involved in?
- Pomeroy: He was not involved in their community affairs. It's interesting--community affairs departments were not visible in the fifties. There may have been, and there probably were, some officers in various companies and corporations who had perhaps some kinship with public relations, but with a community flavor to it. Most of the people that we saw in the lower echelons of corporate management who interested themselves in community activities were coming out of the PR departments.
- Morris: When were you first aware of Mr. Stewart as an able fellow with promise?
- Pomeroy: I would think the pretty early days of United Bay Area Crusade. He came on the UBAC board nominated by Clark Beise. Karl Wente was still around and very much in evidence when UBAC was organized and pretty early on he [Stewart] was a candidate for--I think he became one of the first vice-presidents of UBAC and then moved up the line, and he was the volunteer with whom I worked when he was president of UBAC. Now, he must have been president of UBAC following Fred Whitman because--
- Morris: It was '56 and '57 between Frank Whitman and Norris Nash.
- Pomeroy: Yes, Norrie Nash of Kaiser Industries was our first president from the East Bay.
- Morris: I see, just like a statewide political party, the top people have to vary between counties?
- Pomeroy: Yes, and Sam paid me the great compliment after I had been writing speeches and doing other things for him, saying I was the only person who had ever written a speech for him that he felt perfectly comfortable about reading it.
- Morris: That's a great compliment. You caught his quality of thinking and expression.
- Pomeroy: Yes, this is apparently a flare that I had when I worked with Morty and Sam and with a number of them, that I could pick out their--mimic, I guess, is part of it.

- Morris: Also, if you have sat in committees with them involving this, your thinking would become the same as--?
- Pomeroy: Yes, a lot of this is the way they'd say it. I'm sure that over the years as I worked with some of these people, I developed as part of my own expression some of the ways they would say and do things.
- Morris: That was part of your task?
- Pomeroy: During the years that I was executive assistant to Baarts, I played handmaiden to all of the presidents, yes.
- Morris: And also later on when you were also running the Community Fund?
- Pomeroy: Yes, I would occasionally get involved in some special thing for Baarts in terms of helping. For example, for the annual UBAC meeting, if somebody was doing something and he needed somebody to attend to a volunteer, I would take on that kind of a project, generally because I knew them and could do it with more ease than some of the more junior staff people could.
- Morris: It would also sound like staffing this advance gifts committee would have some useful carryover to your work in the Fund.
- Pomeroy: Yes, in the process you get to to know everybody in town and on a fairly close working relationship with them. It was out of that kind of experience that I was on a first-name basis with Helen Russell and with Caroline Charles, with a whole segment of the community that, left to my own, running the Fund, I would not necessarily have had as close a relationship with them.
- Morris: They were part of this advance gifts routine?
- Pomeroy: Yes.



Presentation to Selah Chamberlain, left, on completing his term as president of San Francisco United Community Fund, 1958-1960, by Mrs. Pomeroy and Don Fazackerley.



Fundraising the festive way: third annual domino tournament to benefit Hunter's Point Boys' Club, 1964. Mrs. Pomeroy with William Zellerbach.



Planning session for United Crusade fund campaign, mid-60s. Mortimer Fleishhacker presiding (in glasses). On his left, UCF staff member David deMarche, Mrs. Pomeroy, board member Seaton Manning.

XIV VARIETIES OF PLANNING AND FUNDING; COMPLETION OF UBAC
UNIFICATION

Bay Area Welfare Planning Federation, 1959-1966*

Morris: I find Caroline Charles also referred to as chairing a group on priorities. Now, was that for UBAC?

Pomeroy: Yes, that was for UBAC.

Morris: Okay, let's move on then and talk a little about the planning function. It's a little unclear from this vantage point, the relationship between the UBAC planning committee and your planning section in the Fund, and then there was the Welfare Planning Federation.

Pomeroy: Now, the Welfare Planning Federation was disbanded as the result of a study done by the joint interim committee, which was chaired by Frank Sloss and included membership from all of the counties, from their planning bodies--not from their United Fund bodies.

San Francisco was the only county where the social planning committee was a part of the corporate body of the United Community Fund. In the other counties they were all separate corporations. Talk about Alice in Wonderland!

Morris: Yes, very, very much like that.

*For a detailed discussion of the federation and its evolution into the Bay Area Social Planning Council, see Eva Hance, History of the Bay Area Planning Federation August 1955-January 1966 in the Social Welfare Archives, The Bancroft Library.

Pomeroy: It was totally Alice in Wonderland complete with white rabbits and Cheshire cats!

Morris: As far back as '55 and '59 and then in '61, I came across references to the need for facts upon which to decide priorities. Was that a continuing process from which something workable emerged?

Pomeroy: I guess it's questionable about whether anything very workable ever emerged. Then the Bay Area Social Planning Council came into being about 1967, on the recommendation of the joint interim committee and had the benefit of Morty Fleishhacker's guidance.

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Pomeroy: He was on a trip to India and the nomination for chairman of the Bay Area Social Planning Council board of directors had to be made. We got on the telephone and got Morty in India and got him to agree that he would serve as chairman of that board. so he was the first chairman of the Bay Area Social Planning Council.

Morris: You and Janet got on the phone?

Pomeroy: No, Janet was with him. No, it could have been Sam Stewart. It depends on who the president of UBAC was at the time.

The original mission that was spelled out for the Bay Area Social Planning Council was that they would provide facts and figures to help the UBAC allocations committee in carrying out its business. We also contemplated that we would have assistance from members of the Bay Area Social Planning staff in connection with staffing the UBAC budget development, so that we would achieve this linkage of staff participation in both the planning function and the budgeting function.

Morris: Why was UBAC reluctant to fund the planning functions if it emerged as the result of a committee of--?

Pomeroy: It wasn't reluctant to fund the planning federation. It was reluctant to give them the total amount of money they wanted.

Morris: Okay, there is a difference.

Pomeroy: Yes, there is a difference. Paul Akana was brought out from Pittsburg where he had been the director of social planning.

Morris: From where?

Pomeroy: Pittsburgh, Pa. Paul was a very creative and imaginative soul and worked very well with Morty Fleishhacker, but what they did--whether it was by design or not I can't tell you because this was something I never talked to Morty about--but what they did was turn that Bay Area social planning process into a very professional study organization and they embarked on the study of a variety of problems that related to the total Bay Area. But it did not--

Morris: Do you mean the abstract, sort of an R&D operation?

Pomeroy: Yes, and it did not necessarily produce the kind of information that was needed to help in the budgeting process.

Morris: Morty was interested in this kind of an approach that Akana was developing?

Pomeroy: It certainly was done with Morty's support. Now, Morty, I think, retained his concern about the planning function being of material use in budgeting, but somewhere in that whole planning process, the vital link with budgeting was seriously impaired, if not lost.

Morris: I worked on some local social planning committees in the 1960s. My recollection is that they usually emerged out of a felt or recognized need, what are we going to do about mental retardation sort of thing, and the recommendations usually involved developing programs and looking for money to do it. How do you set it up so that it relates to allocating existing money coming in through a general funding campaign?

Pomeroy: One thesis that ran through the considerations of planning boards, fund boards, fundraising people and so on, was the continuing question: are we funding agencies that have outlived their usefulness? If we are, we should find the way to identify those services that may have become obsolete so that the money that is going to them can be used to meet some new needs that are clearly being identified.

Of course, as time went on, this became more and more acute and there was less and less possibility of identifying obsolete services, I cannot honestly say that there were obsolete services. There were agencies that were very slow to change, but the youth serving agencies--all of them--that takes the whole range of Boys Clubs, Campfire, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Ys--all of them had roles to play, but they needed to come into the twentieth century. Particularly they needed to recognize the changing populations that had to be served. That was just one example of the

fact that, while some people thought of some of those agencies as being obsolete, the general consensus was that indeed they were not obsolete. They were needed, but they needed to change.

Morris: The existing program didn't necessarily meet the needs that--?

Pomeroy: Yes, and so a lot of encouragement was given to lay and staff leadership in those kinds of agencies to look and bring about change. The same thing was happening nationally--the YW board nationally, for example-- long before the Ys really began to do outreach programs in minority communities, had had study groups working on it and were making it very solid--

Morris: Internally?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: So as it emerged in practice, the Bay Area planning function was more of an education and to raise things up to the state of the art in whatever the field was?

Pomeroy: I think that's what it was intended to be. Now, I'm certainly not competent to try and make any judgment as to how successful they were.

Morris: Then within your agency in San Francisco, UCF--how did the social-planning function work within the unit you did have responsibility for?

Pomeroy: The social-planning function--do you have the date that the Bay Area Welfare Federation came into being?

Morris: It came into being in '59 and continued through until '66.

Pomeroy: The Bay Area Welfare Planning Federation--it was followed by the Bay Area Social Planning Council and what I have just said applies pretty much to the Bay Area Welfare Planning Federation as well as to the Bay Area Social Planning Council; which means that started in '66 when we had already merged.

Morris: And you were back at UBAC.

Pomeroy: I was back at UBAC and we had already merged the United Community Fund and the funds around the bay. We had merged all of them into UBAC and we no longer had separate corporations for fundraising.

UCF Social Planning Committee; Hunters Point District Council and Black Involvement

Morris: But while there was the Community Fund as a separate entity and you were executive of it, you had a social planning--

Pomeroy: We had a very active Social Planning Committee as a part of the Community Fund corporate structure and that was headed at the staff level David DeMarche.

Morris: What kinds of things was DeMarche interested in doing?

Pomeroy: He reflected the consensus of our Social Planning Committee and our board and myself. We were interested in continuing the social-planning structure with its councils that had existed for some time in San Francisco. The other thing we were interested in and were actively working on was the development of some district councils. There was one at Hunters Point, there was one in the Western Addition. We saw the development of some district councils as being very important to the recognition of some of the new problems that were developing, particularly with minority populations. The greatest regret that a number of us had when the Bay Area Social Planning Council came into being was the decimation of our whole council structure--the health council, the family and children's, group work and recreation, and the council on the aging, plus the district councils.

Morris: Let's talk about the work that those councils were able to do before they got modernized.

Pomeroy: [laughs] Modernized out of existence. The most successful one was the district council in Hunters Point. That was chaired by Mrs. Margaret Douglas who was a very active member of the city Social Services Commission, had been an active participant in all aspects of Catholic charities, and became a strong, vocal, energetic protagonist for dealing with the problems in the Hunter's Point area.

Morris: Now, would she have been black herself?

Pomeroy: No, she was an Irish Catholic.

Morris: The Hunters Point council was to deal with the black community out there.

Pomeroy: Yes, but it did involve early participation and membership by a number of the black leaders, principally the clergy and women in the Hunters Point area.

- Morris: Do you recall, perhaps, the initial visits with the people in the Hunters Point area about starting something like this and what they said and what you said and what Mrs. Douglas said?
- Pomeroy: That no, because that development took place initially during the transition between Eva Hance and David DeMarche and it was Eva and David and Margaret Douglas.
- Morris: So that's about 1950.
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes. One of the things that emerged from the Hunters Point district council was the development of the first Youth Opportunity Center. It was the first Youth Opportunity Center in the country. It was set up under an ordinance that was passed by the board of supervisors, and it was the recipient of Ford Foundation money, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare funds.
- Morris: During the span that it was in operation? It didn't all happen at once?
- Pomeroy: No, but it happened very quickly. We developed an ordinance that was adopted by the city that provided for the establishment of a Youth Opportunity Committee, and we got Morty Fleishhacker to chair that committee.
- Morris: That met in Hunters Point?
- Pomeroy: It met frequently at 2015 Steiner Street [community fund and UBAC offices], but it also met in Hunters Point from time to time as well. It was that committee, and I wish I could remember the progression of the development of this idea, I think the initiation of it started with something that Dave DeMarche had been able to do with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and with the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation and HEW became mutually interested in this demonstration program which was to identify Hunters Point youth who needed training and to provide them with training and to set up job finding resources. It was all to be done in collaboration with the Department of Employment, with the San Francisco Unified School District for training, and with the counseling being done by the Youth Opportunity Center staff that was working under the direction of the Youth Opportunity Committee.

It was interdisciplinary and multi-agency. It was really a fascinating project. We also had quite a collection of real problems in connection with it. At one time, Ron Dellums worked on that staff.

Morris: I remember that. He was a socialworker before he went on the Berkeley City Council.

Pomeroy: Yes, and he worked on that staff.

Morris: Was he a part of a problem in connection with the center?

Pomeroy: No, I would say not. He was very busy getting his Master's at Cal.

Morris: Interestingly enough, he has a lot of family connected with East Bay good works, so he is indeed indigenous.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes.

Morris: But there were what kinds of problems?

Pomeroy: We had real management problems--we recruited a black man with a terrific reputation. He came from Seattle. He was almost impossible to supervise. Dave and I between us nearly broke our backs in trying to have this man understand that he worked with the United Community Fund. He was on our payroll because that was the basis on which we had set up the project.

We were the fiscal agents for the project, but we also were the sponsors of the Youth Opportunity Center.

Morris: I see, so that any staff for the center worked for the United Community Fund, not for the committee.

Pomeroy: That's right. He couldn't stand it and couldn't stand that he was working for a woman. David and I nearly lost our minds over the whole thing. In due time he was replaced, but he was replaced after we had some real problems in terms of some of the expenditures that had been made, some equipment that had been bought that couldn't be accounted for, and a number of really quite serious problems.

I am trying to remember who succeeded that man. But the management of that project was one that took a great deal of David's time, David deMarche, and a certain amount of my time.

Morris: What about getting the ordinance through the board of supervisors? Were there liberal spirits who were looking to encourage this kind of thing at that point?

Pomeroy: The board of supervisors was persuaded by the fact we had to have a legally constituted public body in order to accept the DHEW and the Ford Foundation funds and in order to command the necessary

cooperation because some of the money that we were getting was being used to fund part of the Department of Employment portion of the project. The project was totally funded, it did not require any local match at all.

Morris: Did you have an advocate on the board of supervisors at that point?

Pomeroy: Yes, and I can't remember who it was.

Morris: Was that before Terry Francois was on the board of supervisors?

Pomeroy: No, Terry was on the board and I'm sure was supportive. I think we had several friends on the board of supervisors at that time. This would have been during George Christopher's time as mayor, I think.

Morris: Was this considered a breakthrough in terms of working with the black community at that point?

Pomeroy: Yes, it was considered a breakthrough in several areas. This preceded the [federal] poverty program and we saw it as a wonderful model for. In fact, we really tried to get the city to accept the idea that the Community Fund, on the same basis that we did the Youth Opportunity Center, could run the poverty program. We thought we had something and I still think we had something that might have made a tremendous difference, but the influence of the black leadership in the community was much too strong--

Morris: By '64-'65.

Pomeroy: You bet. They were not about to see any private agency have the authority and responsibility. For their interests they were probably entirely correct, because there was nothing except the Youth Opportunity Program to indicate that the Community Fund had the sensitivity and the total willingness to incorporate the black leadership into its program. All that existed prior to that were token blacks, you know that, on community chest or United Community Fund or UBAC for that matter. We probably would have done a job that would have let the money go much farther with much less lost.

Morris: Right, but it would have had some different philosophical bases, too.

Pomeroy: That's right.

Morris: Did some people emerge from either the neighborhood committee or working on the program who then did become more involved?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. Dan Collins, for example. Dr. Dan Collins, the dentist, became a very effective member of the Youth Opportunity Committee. It was Dan really who led Morty Fleishhacker into a really much more involved role in relationship with the black community.

Morris: How did that come about?

Pomeroy: It came about because of these two men sitting together on this committee and learning to respect each other. Dan will say to this day that his experience on that committee (and I've forgotten who made up the membership of the committee, but Morty was the person who stood out) taught him that there were ways in which responsible people in the black community could work with responsible people in the white community and to feel enriched by it.

Morris: Is he still around San Francisco?

Pomeroy: Oh, very much so, yes. In fact, I am sitting on the Educational Committee of the Yori Wada Fund and so is Dan, we are having a reunion once in a while on that committee. Oh, he's a wonderful person. He, for example, is someone who could have given exemplary service as a regent of the University of California, in my opinion. He is just such a superior person.

Morris: Getting back to the whole question of how the board responded to new concerns in the community. Did that all come out of the social planning or is it a matter of your board being a kind of sensor to what is going on out there?

Pomeroy: That came out of social planning but in order to be carried out and implemented, it had to have the response of the board and it got solid response. The board accepted the proposals and recommendations of the Social Planning Committee and the responsibility that was involved in serving as the fiscal agent for the--

Morris: Was this the first time that the fund had served as fiscal agent for a new kind of--

Pomeroy: I can't really answer that. It may have been. It's possible that under Eva's guidance through the Social Planning Committee there have been some others, but this was certainly the first major undertaking of its kind.

Morris: One of the really tricky questions on the poverty funds and foundation money is how to help grassroots--

Pomeroy: Well, we had the one grand experiment. We were still struggling with some aspects of it a number of years later when we were being audited both by the Ford Foundation and the federal government,

even after I left UBAC in '68. When I was at the Council on Alcoholism, I was getting requests to come and help resolve questions for auditors on the funding of the youth opportunity project.

Morris: How long did it last?

Pomeroy: Three years. I think we had three years funding and by then the poverty program was underway.

Morris: Did it become part of the poverty program?

Pomeroy: I think portions of it did, yes, but it did not remain as a separate identifiable project.

Morris: Was the youth program the only part of it or were there other kinds of--

Pomeroy: It was entirely focussed on youth under twenty-one, sixteen to twenty-one.

Morris: Did the idea of the neighborhood centers come in as part of a number of recommendations or general concern that it's time that San Francisco took a look at the black community in the city?

Pomeroy: I don't think I can make an intelligent observation about that. The emergence of the Youth Opportunity Center was the direct result of the district council's concern for black youth in the Hunter's Point area.

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City Planners; Committee and Board Members

Morris: About the same time, Bill Roth was president of the Council for Civic Unity they were also interested in neighborhood councils not so much in terms of specific programs but as a mechanism for people to become involved in the community politically. Was there any kind of contact between UCF and organizations like the Council for Civic Unity?

Pomeroy: I don't think so. Now, there may have been some informal networking. There were in existence a variety of neighborhood organizations. There were groups in Potrero Heights, Portola Valley

and Ingleside, that had come together around probably some specific problems in their respective neighborhoods. We visualized ultimately the potential of the involvement of those neighborhood groups in this council structure that could then feed up into an overall social planning structure. I still think it's a wonderful idea.

Morris: It's curious, the continuing lack of a place to go to discuss immediate concerns. It's one that most of the people you talk to who have had contact with the Bay Area Social Planning Council cite as a lack.

Pomeroy: Yes, absolutely.

Morris: And not only the lay volunteers, but also the--

Pomeroy: The professionals, yes.

Morris: I'd like to talk a little bit about the health council and the family and groupwork if you want to wrap that up briefly now.

Pomeroy: It's fascinating to see the membership of the fund membership committee then. There were Norman Coliver, Peter Arnstein, Richard Frank, Sam Stewart, Frank Tatum, Dr. Mary Olney-- all still here and alive twenty-one years later.

Morris: They looked like the--

Pomeroy: The reliables yes. Mrs. Otto Miller is dead, Ed Kemmitt is dead, Don Fazackerly is, but there is quite a group there.

Morris: They stayed with your committee for several years and then moved on to other committees in the organization?

Pomeroy: They moved, some of them by our design, from the United Community Fund membership committee to the Bay Area membership committee when we merged in 1966.

Morris: So the local committees were also considered as sort of a farm system?

Pomeroy: Absolutely, and that was a conscious effort that I was directly involved in then, because agency relations included membership and budgeting as well as a few other functions. We reached out and tried to insure that from every county we got people on the Bay Area membership committee that had had experience at the county level and could reflect some knowledge of what had gone on in their respective counties.

Morris: So there would be some continuity?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: What about new members? Where did you go looking for new board members?

Pomeroy: Generally speaking, for membership on the board itself or the Social Planning Committee, we looked to the most involved lay leadership in the agencies. You tried to leaven that with a few people who were not directly involved with any given agency at a given point in time. Presumably there were people who had had some agency involvement at one time or another, but you looked for a sort of a senior--what do I want to say?--the person who could always bring to bear some views that were not too colored by ongoing agency experiences.

Morris: Did you find people generally were willing to come on committees?

Pomeroy: Generally, there appeared to be a real recognition that this was an honor to serve on the board of the Fund or on the Social Planning Committee or on the budget panels. There did not appear to be a great reluctance on the part of volunteers. They saw it as a sort of a progression of their community activity.

Morris: Once they accepted a position on a committee or the board, how were they about attendance and taking on the responsibilities you asked them?

Pomeroy: Generally good. I would say, if I were to paint with a very broad brush, I would say seventy-five percent of the people who accepted membership on boards and committees did so with the clear purpose of serving. It was only if something extraordinary occurred that they couldn't and in most cases of that seventy-five percent, if they found that they habitually couldn't get to meetings, they would say, "Look, this isn't going to fit for me. Now, let me off." Another twenty-five percent, I think, did it because they either felt they should or they wanted their names up there.

Morris: That's not a bad percentage.

[Interview #9: July 28, 1982] ##

Clarifying UCF and UBAC Relationships; Women's Roles; Funding Challenges

Morris: Reading over my notes and remembering the conversation we had last time we met, I had the feeling that we were talking about the United Community Fund and the United Crusade almost as one entity.

Pomeroy: That requires a little clarification.

Morris: I was wondering if that is our hindsight because we know that the two did merge in '66 or if there was some of that sense at the time you were director of the Fund?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. Ray Baarts, the gentleman who was the director of UBAC, and I frequently congratulated ourselves on the fact that we worked very well together because there was a period, I would say, at least three or four years when the continued existence of the separate county united funds complicated the life of UBAC in several ways.

First of all, each of the five united funds, plus UBAC, had key volunteers. The very people that in each of the counties were the leaders and had to accept and perform with a great deal of responsibility were the same people who had to represent those counties in UBAC. And as part of the UBAC participation, people worked UBAC committees that were counterparts of county committees. The campaign was conducted by UBAC in all five counties and the county fund organizations provided staff support and mobilized volunteers.

Each county received an allocation from UBAC and our agencies were the ultimate beneficiaries of the campaign. So we found that our volunteers were getting weary, they really were, and you would call for a meeting and they would say, "Is this United Community Fund or is it UBAC?" You would say, "It's a UBAC meeting, but it is terribly important that the United Community Fund be represented." The reluctance began to show.

I think I may have mentioned earlier that in San Mateo County and Alameda County particularly there had been very strong feelings about the probability that San Francisco would dominate UBAC, and so the directors in those two counties tended to be very defensive about UBAC activity and reluctant to commit themselves.

As I say, Ray and I used to congratulate ourselves and say, "Isn't it good?" I felt as much of a commitment to UBAC as I did to UCF, because I had been a part of UBAC in the formation of it much more so than had these two gentlemen who headed the two counties.

Morris: Okay, I think that clarifies the feeling I had. We have talked about some of these staff members before. Do any of the volunteers from the other community funds stick out in your memory?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, some wonderful people and from all the counties. We became very close, for example, to Norris Nash, who was the president of the Alameda County United Fund and later president of the United Bay Area Crusade. Mrs. Thomas Mellon, who initially was very active in the Marin United Fund, became a staunch and effective supporter of the United Bay Area Crusade. In San Mateo County, Robert Koshland and a couple of women down there who were simply terrific. The support of volunteer leaders from the counties plus Ray Baarts' tact, diplomacy and clear view of where we needed to go provided a commitment to the ultimate objective. The volunteers and Ray Baarts believed the end could be achieved by encouraging, not bullying.

Morris: And that it was an organic process that was going to take time.

Pomeroy: It was a growing process, yes.

Morris: At the county board level and then at the Bay Area level, was there any visible difference in the roles played by the women and men on these boards?

Pomeroy: Yes. The visible difference was that the United Community Fund had not had a woman president since Mrs. Henry Potter Russell, Helen Russell. That was many, many years ago. To my knowledge, none of the other county funds ever had a woman president. That was the most visible difference. The men held the senior officer's posts.

Morris: Women were at the board level because they had worked their way up through various agencies?

Pomeroy: They had worked their way up through agencies, through participation in budgeting and planning, and participation in the campaign at what used to be the old residential campaign level. The women always organized that. That changed when we stopped doing door-to-door solicitation and the women took on a variety of special campaign assignments, but not the major corporations and not the major donors. There were a few key women that you always had on your major donor-soliciting group.

Morris: Because they represented either a family or money?

Pomeroy: Yes, yes. Mrs. Robert Watt Miller, for example, you always had her. [laughs] I don't remember too many of them, as a matter of fact.

Morris: Then men would largely come in directly from business because they could bring the business skills and the managerial--

Pomeroy: Yes, because they brought the power of the business community to support the annual campaign with corporate giving and payroll deduction giving.

Morris: Mrs. Thomas Mellon, her husband was a very visible person. This was when he was Chief Administrative Officer, of San Francisco?

Pomeroy: Her involvement initially was prior to his becoming chief administrative officer. When he became CAO, they had to move to San Francisco. They had lived in Marin County, their children were brought up in Marin County, and Tom Mellon was president of a San Francisco business, Wesix Co.

Morris: In the board meetings and committee meetings, you must have sat in thousands--

Pomeroy: Thousands!

Morris: Was there any difference between the roles of the men and the women and who would take the initiative?

Pomeroy: The women who were there as duly elected, and they made up about fifty percent of the boards, were well respected and well regarded. The roles they played were not the heavy campaign roles. They were a lighter campaign role and then a lot of other activities.

Morris: In the United Community Fund per se, in some of those planning committees and in some of the standing committees on health and group work and things like that?

Pomeroy: Women were extremely active and carried a lot of responsibility and were the people when the decisions and recommendations were being made in those committees, their views counted for just as much as any of the men.

Morris: In reading some of the minutes, which were primarily from '58 through '61, most of the reports that were mentioned seemed to be from groups chaired by men.

- Pomeroy: Maybe it's right. That had not occurred to me because I think of women like Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Gardiner, and many others.
- Morris: The first woman I came across the mention of was Caroline Charles's committee in 1961 which had been studying priorities. I kept coming across references to "we have been trying to figure out how to set priorities."
- Pomeroy: [laughs] Which they never successfully did: that's a continuing exercise.
- Morris: Because the priorities change over a period of years or because people disagree as to what--?
- Pomeroy: I think three things happen. One, the priorities change. The new needs from the community become evident and somehow have to be accommodated. This was particularly true in the period '55 through '75, I would say, a twenty-year period with the emergence of browns and blacks and their needs, a continuing concern about women and children but with more emphasis on some of the needs of women, whereas fifteen years before it had been children: so that there were new needs that had to be identified.

It seems to to me that seventy-five percent of the difficulty in setting priorities rests in the difficulty of finding anything that you are willing to say "we don't need any more." Look at the Fruit and Flower Mission and the fact that it took ten years to defund it. The commitments of individuals to particular causes are often bases of their support of the community-wide interest.

I remember vividly sitting in a meeting right down the street here in the office of a major corporation with a man devoted to the Boy Scouts, when the Boy Scouts were about to be cut. The gentleman, a senior corporate officer, summoned us and we went.

He said, "It is as simple as this. If the Boy Scouts are cut by \$50,000, the corporate gift will be cut by \$50,000 and it will go to the Boy Scouts."

- Morris: Was this kind of bargaining in terms of gifts in relation to--
- Pomeroy: To budgeting.
- Morris: Was that something that you often had to deal with?
- Pomeroy: Not uncommon, not uncommon. The feeling was--and I think it has, to a degree, worked that way--that if you were dealing on a Bay Area basis, it was going to be easier to avoid that kind of trade-

off and particularly if you were dealing with Bay Area-wide agencies. By then, we had, I'm sure, the Ys on a five county basis, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls. They have tried to do it with mental health associations. They have tried to do it with a number of agencies where they have enterprises in more than one county.

It's the age-old question when you make a judgment as to whether you are willing to give up some grassroots autonomy with which you have involvement. You have whole groups of people who, when something becomes so big that it is part of a five-county operation, they just say, "It's too big for me, I don't understand it."

Agency Program: Health Funding

Morris: Maybe we could talk a little bit about a few of the planning studies that I came across as, perhaps, representative of what the United Community Fund was dealing with. In November of '58, not too long after you became executive, there was a request for review and study and recommendations on five agency plans for a three-year joint public relations program. This involved the Travelers Aid and four other agencies who felt they were unpopular and misunderstood.

Pomeroy: We're pretty handicapped when we start talking about this because in that first year of my involvement as executive of the fund with Eva Hance as director of social planning, my faith and trust and confidence was such that I did not become intimately involved in those planning processes. I became much more involved after Eva had retired and by the time I had a year under my belt as the executive. So that one, I can simply remember some sitting in on two or three meetings in which Jean Bolton was one of the people. I am remembering the woman who was with Travelers Aid and then one or two meetings in which we brought some of the volunteers from those agencies. But my recollection is that we never produced anything in the way of a co-ordinated PR program for those agencies.

Morris: They didn't go ahead with it on their own?

Pomeroy: I believe not, no.

Morris: In May of '59, Stanford Hospital was going through the process of deciding whether or not to move to Palo Alto or they had decided to move to Palo Alto and they were trying to deal with what San Francisco's reaction to that was. Was that one that you might have been more involved in?

Pomeroy: We became involved only peripherally because we were providing some but not a great deal of support for outpatient clinics at Stanford, Mt. Zion, Childrens--those three hospitals, I think--and probably Mary's Help. So our involvement at that stage was the agreement that we would continue to recognize the need for outpatient clinic services that had been dealt with by Stanford Hospital and that if they moved to Palo Alto, obviously their outpatients weren't going to follow them, what we would be looking at would be either of two options.

One would be that another hospital would occupy that facility, which is eventually what happened, or that the patient load would probably go to Childrens and Mt. Zion and be divided between the two of them perhaps and that we would then look at simply taking the money we had been putting into the outpatient service and dividing it between the places where the people ended up.

But we were not directly involved. Our health council was very strongly influenced by the active participation of a number of the Stanford doctors who were not going to move to Palo Alto. So I don't think we raised a voice; in fact, I am sure we didn't raise a voice about whether or not San Francisco needed the Presbyterians to buy that hospital from Stanford.

Morris: Were the Stanford doctors not going because they weren't invited or because they weren't going to leave San Francisco?

Pomeroy: They weren't going to leave their patients in San Francisco and they desperately wanted a hospital.

Morris: To function out of?

Pomeroy: Surely, and obviously they were not going to Franklin. They could have gone to Childrens, but probably Childrens would have been overburdened at that point. But we've looked so long and hard at the fact that Presbyterian Hospital contributed materially to the overbedding in this community. The only thing that really helped very much was when Mary's Help moved out to Daly City. But, as I say, my recollection was that there wasn't a voice raised. Fred Merrill was the beloved president of the United Community Fund and he headed up the group that negotiated and bought the--

Morris: The facility?

Pomeroy: The facility and it became Presbyterian.

Morris: Caroline Charles recalled that the volunteer program was developed in this time of transition for Presbyterian Hospital to help bridge this gap between the departure of Stanford and the acquisition of the facility by the Presbyterian group.*

Pomeroy: Oh, I would think that was highly likely but I don't know that part. About the time or within a relatively short period of time after the facility was acquired and became Presbyterian, we began to look at whether or not the support of outpatient-clinic services was an appropriate role for United Way because hospital costs and hospital deficits were mounting and mounting and mounting. If we were making an allocation of \$50,000 to a clinic at Childrens Hospital, it was a drop in the bucket. I don't think at any time that the United Fund put more than about a quarter of a million dollars into all the hospitals combined. We kept looking at that quarter of a million dollars and thinking how much it was needed in some other direct service.

Morris: Was this the reason for setting up a health council in the Fund? Wasn't that something that came about while you were executive?

Pomeroy: Oh, no, there had been a health council some years before I arrived. As a matter of fact, Dan Dougherty, who is the Libertarian candidate in Marin County, was the staff director for the health council when I first went to work there. He left and went into the insurance business and has since become a Libertarian political figure. I don't think he was a socialworker by training but I could be wrong. But, no, there had been a health council in the community chest for a number of years.

Groupwork and Casework Skills in Administration

Morris: After Eva Hance left, David DeMarche became your social planning director. Did you work more closely with him than you had with Eva Hance?

*In Caroline Moore Charles, The Action and Passion of our Times, Regional Oral History Office, Berkeley, 1979.

Pomeroy: I involved myself more for two reasons. One, David was new to San Francisco and, two, I had developed enough confidence in my own capacity to understand and participate in the social planning process and felt that it was of great significance and that it was important for me to be involved in it if I was going to adequately reflect to the board of the Fund the social-planning process and its recommendations and judgment. It was not a manifestation as far as I was concerned of a lack of trust in David as it was a felt need on my part to be more involved in that.

Morris: Some people felt that Mr. DeMarche was not the strongest social planning person in the Bay Area.

Pomeroy: Oh, I think, yes, David demonstrated over the years that he was here--anybody who followed in the footsteps of Eva Hance was going to be looked upon as less than adequate, in my opinion, because Eva was superb. She was a superb socialworker. She was a superb strategist in terms of accomplishing things. She's a very unique lady.

Morris: The study she wrote of the Welfare Planning Federation is very good, but it is sort of classical professional social work. There is not much juice. I didn't get a sense, as I am from you, of the richness of the personalities.

Pomeroy: If I had a critical word about Eva Hance, you would have to drag it out of me because I admire her so. But she was professional to the nth degree and very seldom did you break through that professional stance. I think I would make the contrast between the manner in which Eva would operate and the manner in which I would operate. I would almost always develop one or two personal relationships among the volunteers, not that we would become bosom pals and that sort of thing, but I would have an occasional lunch or I would be occasionally invited to their homes. Eva resisted those kinds of relationships completely. But, oh, what a grand person! It's just sad that we don't have her oral history because her total experience was a very rich one.* She was in Arizona with the Red Cross in the very early days. She did a variety of things with emergency programs.

Morris: How about Dr. DeMarche? What kinds of shifts in interests and techniques did he bring to the social planning process?

Pomeroy: He brought to the Social Planning Department experience quite different from Eva Hance's. His basic background had been in group work, and his other area of expertise was in major studies, particularly in the mental health field. Obviously the contrast between the two directors (Miss Hance and Dr. DeMarche) was striking, and it took the Social Planning Committee and David some

*See appendix for a brief note Eva Hance wrote about herself.

time working together to become effective as the lay/professional team. On the whole it's my belief that David did a satisfactory job.

Morris: What was the role of social planning in an organization like the Fund?

Pomeroy: The role of the social planning committee, as it existed in those years of the Fund before the development of the Bay Area Social Planning Council, certainly was that of follow-through in terms of findings. For example, once a study had been done that involved an assessment of some of the groupwork agencies, if there were recommendations that had to be implemented that particularly related to their budgeting—for example, salary levels, personnel practices, a variety of things--there had to be somebody within the social planning staff who took responsibility for making sure that there was action. Recommendations approved by the social planning committee, in some cases had gone to the Fund board for approval; they had to be followed through, particularly when they agencies came in for budget hearings.

Kay Grant, who was staff director for the groupwork and recreation council, was excellent. Martin Paley who was director for the health council was excellent. We hired Martin for his very first job out of the School of Public Health [UC] as staff director for the health council.

Morris: Was it evident that Martin had staying power?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, superior; really. That was one recruitment I certainly never regretted! He really was just excellent. Martin was the staff person who really pulled off for us setting up the rehabilitation workshop in San Francisco that represented the combined efforts of Cerebral Palsy, Aid to Retarded Children, and another agency.

Morris: I remember Cerebral Palsy and Aid to Retarded Children had a lot of tensions between them.

Pomeroy: Two incredible women, Marjorie Brush and Margarete Connolly--and Martin marched between the two of those ladies for quite a while, very ably. Both interesting people. Margarete Connolly is another person who has made a contribution in the field of the developmentally disabled, the retarded, that may be unique in the country. She has been a factor in national legislation, state legislation, and she is quite a character. Marjorie Brush, on the other hand, of United Cerebral Palsy, was a different kind of person. She had been a newspaper woman, had worked in emergency programs during the depression, and had a flair for drawing in

people of disparate backgrounds. Many of the board members of Cerebral Palsy became interested because Marjorie persuaded them it was a worthwhile cause.

Morris: Martin was able to bring about some cooperation and understanding?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. Martin really, for a young man as new to that kind of activity as he was, demonstrated, I thought, quite unique ability to do a planning job and then to stay with it and see it implemented and sit, as he had to, as a member of the organizing committee of that rehabilitation workshop with some very tough, really quite demanding people, both professionals and volunteers, trying to protect the interests of their particular programs.

One of the things that we were able to do was to get the board of the Fund to use (and my recollection is that it might have been as much as \$50,000, but it may have been less than that) of reserve funds that we had as a grant to help set up this rehabilitation workshop.

Morris: Now, when you say rehabilitation workshop, this is not a meeting, this is a workshop for people who need physical rehabilitation?

Pomeroy: This is a rehabilitation workshop that was developed on the principle of doing some collaboration with the state Department of Rehabilitation and setting up a workshop where the developmentally disabled or the cerebral palsied would be given training and developed so that they could have a work experience.

Morris: I'm sorry, my mind slipped a cog there. I'm familiar with the workshop as an educational technique.

Impact of Public Funding; Unreal Expectations

Morris: Maybe this is the point to ask about the impact of state and federal governmental programs. Did you see an increase in this while you were head of UCF?

Pomeroy: Oh, clearly, yes; oh, yes, because we had not yet probably--the poverty program came along when?

Morris: In '64.

Pomeroy: I was trying to recall. We've already talked about the--

Morris: The poverty scene.

Pomeroy: We talked about the youth opportunity center and the federal and foundation money that was involved in that. That was the first major public money that we as a fund became involved in. Agencies were beginning to seek and get grants, and I'm trying to recall--I have some recollection of the Family Service Agency qualifying for either state and federal funds that were coming down through the county or some counseling services for some particularly difficult--

Morris: There was beginning to be National Institute of Mental Health money, wasn't there?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: And the state government was expanding health and social service programs.

Pomeroy: Yes. The National Mental Health Act was '59, so the impact of that didn't really begin to show up until about '61 or '62. Our respective planning councils and budgeting committees were beginning to look at and, yes, this is bringing back a thought that became rather important as time went on. We were observing agencies reaching out for new funding for special projects, some of which was coming from public sources, occasionally some from foundations, and there was beginning to be a real fear that these would be term funds that would last one, two, three, five years perhaps, but that they would then turn to United Crusade to pick up the slack when the grants ran out and when the seed funding was gone.

So we began to develop some policies that spoke to this in terms of requiring that agencies present information to the planning council about any new programs before they implemented them.

Morris: Before they received the money?

Pomeroy: Yes, yes, and part of that planning had to include some indication of how they were going to support this new program.

Morris: How well did people comply with this kind of--?

Pomeroy: Pretty well, yes, because we wielded a fairly heavy club on that one. We indicated that it could directly affect our budgeting.

Morris: In later years, into the seventies, it almost seemed to become a game in which it looked like agencies would find a new name or reshuffle their program to have a new name so they would get additional funding and then when the grant ran out, they would rework all that and have another new program that used existing--

Pomeroy: Yes, there is no question but that the availability--and hindsight is so marvelous. We get to look back and say, "We really shouldn't have done it that way." I now deplore the extent to which we encouraged agencies to seek outside funding, public funding particularly. I think that on balance a very heavy price has been paid for that. First of all, it encouraged the legislators, both state and federal, because all kinds of people came supporting their proposals. It has become really a fairly vicious circle and look at the price that is now being paid for the withdrawal.

Morris: When the public sector cannot continue to provide that kind of support.

Pomeroy: That's right, yes. We now know that the public sector can't afford to continue it. We have created, probably, and this is not something I should speculate upon at any length, but we really created an unreal world of service.

Morris: In terms of expectation or in terms of support?

Pomeroy: In terms of expectation and the ability to support those expectations.

Morris: Were there people from the various state and federal agencies around in San Francisco that you had contact with that were either interested in this or helpful?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, there were. There was Jane McCaskle Murphy who was area director for the State Department of Social Welfare. There was Eunice Elton who has been with the mayor's office now for a long time, but she was the area director for the State Employment Service or a very senior staff person who was responsible for some of the administration of the new manpower programs that were being developed, manpower and training programs. Those were two state people that I remember.

Morris: Were they part of any committees actually in the United Fund?

Pomeroy: Yes, Jane certainly sat on one or more committees of the family and children's council. I am not sure about Eunice having served on UCF committees but [she] was intimately involved in our development of the youth opportunity center out at Hunters Point as the state person who was the most influential, making the judgments about what the state could do in terms of training and so on. I am trying to think of who some of the federal people were and they escape me. Does that suggest that they might not have been all that impressive?

Morris: Jane McCaskle had been part of the San Francisco social welfare scene for a long time.

Pomeroy: As a state employee, yes.

Morris: Were the federal people that you came in contact with new people from out of town?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, they were in the main new people. I do remember well Fay Hunter, who was the regional director for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He had been a good friend when I first came back from Europe. He did not become active in our local affairs. My recollection is that our occasional efforts to enlist participation in our local planning efforts by regional federal people were not successful because they saw themselves as being too committed to a broader area of responsibility in a number of states.

Morris: Right, San Francisco has been headquarters of a seven-state federal region.

Pomeroy: Yes, sometimes eleven. It was not very reasonable to think that we could get them to participate though I recall a few people that we thought had some particular expertise that we would like to have kept and which we did on an informal basis from time to time. But I don't have any recollections of any of the federal people who were particularly significant in relation to the United Community Fund.

Now, Eva Hance again during her tenure when she continued as director of social planning, had close connections with the Childrens Bureau in Washington through Aleta Brownlee, with the Indian Service, and with a number of other people in the Social Security system. Many of her pals from earlier days had ended up at the federal level on the Washington scene. When we were interested in legislation or the interpretation of legislation, we generally had someone, and I can remember for a number of years occasionally going to Eva and saying, "Who do you know we could talk to about this?"

Morris: Because of things that UCF was doing or because of member agencies needing to know?

Pomeroy: More likely it would be because of member agencies and because we tried to be a clearing house, particularly where legislation and new federal regulations were concerned.

Public and Private Giving Procedures

Morris: You mentioned last time that there was also in the Hunters Point project some national foundation money. How were those people to--?

Pomeroy: The Ford Foundation. Oh, they were, I must say, they were delightful to deal with. Compared to the federal government they were so direct and simple and clear as to what they were doing and why they were doing it.

Morris: There is some thought that in the sixties the foundation people spent a lot of time in San Francisco because they were looking for innovative ideas upon which to test some of their foundation theories. Did you have sense of--?

Pomeroy: Our one experience with that was the youth opportunity center and clearly the Ford Foundation was doing that as a guinea pig operation. But that is the only one that comes to my mind.

Morris: How about the local foundations? What was the relationship of the Fund with them?

Pomeroy: Of course, the San Francisco Foundation was relatively new and developing, but there was an inclination on the part of--Well, let me say that I think all of the local foundations generally (I am sure not exclusively, but generally) when they received requests from any of the member agencies of the United Community Fund, they would seek our opinion, our reaction, our evaluation of a proposed project, and became quite supportive of us in this effort to make sure that people weren't starting things that weren't ever going to get finished. Some of the foundations, the San Francisco Foundation particularly, required that UCF agency members submit evidence that they had cleared their proposals with us.

Morris: Did that cause any complaints from member agencies?

Pomeroy: No, not that I recall. I think we had laid down the guideline that we wanted prior opportunity to review proposals for new programs, and the Foundation thought that was a very reasonable thing for us to do and were supportive of it.

Morris: Was this how you got to know John May?

Pomeroy: Probably, yes.

Morris: In your years with the United Community Fund, there weren't too many foundation staff people were there?

Pomeroy: No, John was running the San Francisco Foundation single handed. The Zellerbach Foundation had Charles Stein, or Dick Shepherd first, and then he employed an assistant, because he had both the family foundation and the corporate foundation. Bank of America had somebody who is now retired and he had one person who worked with him.

Most of the corporations had their charitable giving, which for many of them was still corporate giving; they had not set up their own internal foundations, and that corporate giving was handled by either public relations people or community affairs people, but not people who were undertaking to become specialists in the art of giving away money. It was an ancillary chore that somebody who had much more important things to do took on and, of course, to this day some of the major giving that is done by individuals is done without any professional involvement.

It's been interesting. I have been approached by two people in this community who give away a great deal of money. I have done a couple of studies for one of them. I have done a couple of chores for the other for which I have been compensated and then asked by both of them to outline for them what I would think of as a simple but effective procedure to enable them to get some professional input into some of the requests they are considering and absolutely heard nothing more after I had done a, as I say, a very simple design for a consulting relationship--not necessarily something that I would do, but indicating that there are several people in the community who would be qualified to be helpful in these different areas. Nothing came of these suggestions. Perhaps people don't want to be burdened with anything except their own views and judgment. Of course, it's everyone's prerogative to give away their money as they see fit.

Morris: When you consider how hard it is to amass the money, that's curious. I guess John May was the first person I ever heard say that it is difficult to give money away well. I wonder if this functions at all on the governmental level, if the state and federal programs, which have been--

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, in my view I think that we can look at just a whole variety of federal programs, or just let's deal with the two that I am most familiar with and that would be the poverty program and then the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. I find that the process of giving money away that emanates at the federal level and the processes that are developed to--you've looked at federal grant proposals. You know the process that goes on. I am convinced that in many cases the process (the rules and

regulations, criteria, and guidelines) obfuscate the purpose to the point that the final grant bears very little relationship to the purpose for which the legislation was initially enacted.

Morris: That the process obscures what you have set out to do.

Pomeroy: Yes, yes.

Morris: Because of the distance involved between the people administering and--?

Pomeroy: This is certainly a significant part of it, and the other is that when money is being given away by an individual to a cause or for a purpose that is within the geographic purview of the person who is giving it, it is done with a high element of trust. Federal and state governments are not imbued with that same kind of trust, the people who represent federal and state governments. I think they live with a certain amount of concern that their actions may be subject to a lot of criticism, and they develop more and more ways of protectng themselves; and as you become more protective, you certainly become less creative, and as you become more protective, you certainly deny trust.

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Allocations Processes

Morris: Did some of this question of trust versus protectiveness, was that operating here in the Bay Area as we proceeded along the path toward a larger organization?

Pomeroy: Thinking in terms of the development of the Bay Area Crusade, yes, I think one has to say it was certainly a factor. What served to help minimize that as a factor was bringing together both the lay people and the professional staff. I think this is part of what happened when we finally completed the merger of all of the funds into UBAC; and that is that all of the staff finally was one staff and all of the volunteers were one organization.

Morris: We haven't really talked much about the specifics of allocation. That was a process that was also getting very much more professionalized.

Pomeroy: Very much so and had to as the result of the conglomeraiion of 185 agencies at one time all around the bay. I don't know what the present number is, and that was a good consolidation. At one

time, if you took the complete count of all of the agencies that had been involved with all of the community chests and funds all over the Bay Area, it was something like 325. When it got down to 185, it was still a nearly unmanageable chore.

Morris: The allocation was done just by the United Crusade with input from the board members who belonged to the member--

Pomeroy: The allocation process until the merger--remember, you had UBAC as an entity from 1955 until 1966, so you had eleven years before the complete merger took place. The initial process for UBAC was the allocation to the counties, and the counties making the allocations to the individual agencies, and the UBAC allocation process--oh, dear! [laughs] We really ought to get Bob Kahn in for one-half hour's conversation. Do you know Bob Kahn? Bob Kahn is a real character from the East Bay who became the presiding genius of the UBAC allocations committee for several years. A brilliant, brilliant mind, a businessman, an entrepreneur in some ways--Kahn Department Store in Oakland was his family business. Bob was very, very bright and had a great sense of conciliation, but at the same time was outrageous in some of his manners and methods of conducting meetings.

Morris: Can you give me an example?

Pomeroy: He was absolutely tireless and he would keep a committee that might have scheduled itself for a two-hour session, keep them for four hours and think nothing of it and simply say, "I don't think we should leave until we come to an agreement," and then proceed and do it very skillfully. But some people disliked him.

Morris: Well, certainly. You've got your two hours here before it's time to go to tea or meet your friend for a cocktail! [laughs]

Pomeroy: Perhaps because Bob came from Alameda County he was able to accomplish certain things. Early on, the San Francisco leadership made a rather clear decision that they were not prepared to have any of the San Francisco agencies that were solid and justifiable in their budgeting cut in order to improve the lot of their counterparts in another county. So Bob, because he came from Alameda County but respected San Francisco's position, was able to carry a message that, of course, it was important to bring agencies up in the other counties and that the campaign had to raise a great deal more money. But in the meantime, you don't demoralize people who are doing a good job and who are supporting the campaign, because we were getting volunteers from every agency in San Francisco working on the campaign. Because he had that belief and accepted

the position of San Francisco but came from Alameda County, which was the most vigorous protestant, of course, as one might expect, Bob somehow was able to sort of pull this along without losing.

But there were threats by volunteers. We were pretty unkind in our appraisal of some of them and said that they were instigated by the professional staff. We said, "The volunteers are wonderful, but those staff people are inciting them to riot." There were threats that "if we don't get such-and-such, we'll walk out of UBAC," and our first several years of UBAC--

Morris: People were going to pull out because the funds and functions were all merged?

Pomeroy: UBAC existed, but it existed as a confederation and not as a single organization. It didn't exist as a single organization until 1966. So you had the legal potential. If the Alameda County United Fund still existed as a corporate entity, it could pick up its toys and go out and run its own campaign. We would have made it very hard for them, I think.

1966: Emergence of the Unified United Crusade

Morris: What finally made it possible to take the final step to full merger of all aspects in all counties?

Pomeroy: I think the determination of the volunteer leadership who recognized that you were never going to have as strong a unified campaign unless you had a single organization, that you couldn't tolerate over a long period of time the dissension that came from having separate corporate entities. People are people with personalities and I think the reason--I think I've mentioned this once before, but the reason that Harold Winey was invited to resign by the board of the San Francisco Federated Fund, the United Community Fund, was that he was not prepared to give wholehearted support to UBAC.

I don't know how much my relationship with UBAC and the fact that I was a UBAC staff member had to do with my selection as director of the United Community Fund, but I would think some, Ray Baarts and I worked in complete harmony. But San Francisco and Marin became the counties that worked in complete harmony with Ray Baarts. According to the Alameda and San Mateo directors, Pomeroy sold out to Baarts. That was all right. It didn't bother me in

the slightest, because I knew what I thought our volunteers believed in, and I had been close enough to UBAC to become convinced that this was a desirable thing to do.

- Morris: What finally turned the tide so that the other four counties, boards of directors voted to take the step to dissolve themselves into a new entity?
- Pomeroy: I think it was undoubtedly the fact that if San Francisco became part of UBAC, we were then going to be in a stronger position than any one of the other four and they had better come along. I think it was purely strategy.
- Morris: Strategy and reality--"We all agree we need money"--and the wish for more money overrode the wish for autonomy?
- Pomeroy: Yes, yes. It was not an easy decision in any of the counties. In many ways, it was easier in San Francisco because the leadership of UBAC was at least in substantial part the leadership of San Francisco. This is not so true in the other counties and it was hard. There was dissension. There were people, and there are probably people to this day who believe that it would have been better if each county had stayed on their own. But when you look at--I think they raised thirty million dollars in the last campaign--I don't think if there had been five separate campaigns going on, that would ever had happened.
- Morris: About a year earlier, in '64-'65, the Welfare Planning Federation dissolved in order that there be formed a Bay Area Social Planning Council, funded primarily from the United Crusade.
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, and again the United Crusade was in a position to force that merger because they said, "We will make a grant for a five-county planning organization. We will not continue to make grants to five separate planning organizations." It was never said that bluntly, but that was the implication.
- Morris: So then one day you are executive director of the United Community Fund and then the next day, you are agency relations head of UBAC as the five-county organization. Was it as abrupt at one day and the next or was there a transition period?
- Pomeroy: Oh, there was a real transition period. For some time Baarts had been holding staff meetings for all of us. I had been agency relations for UBAC before I became director of the United Community Fund, so it was picking up where I left off, but with the size and scope of the job considerably different.
- Morris: And your relationship was different.

Pomeroy: Yes, the relationship was very different. I had by this time established myself as a senior person in the voluntary system in San Francisco and the Bay Area and had worked long enough and closely enough with volunteers from all of the counties as a part of the campaign responsibility that I was, I think it is fair to say, very well accepted in that role. [laughs] Ray Baarts used to say that that really was the easiest appointment that he made.

Morris: In the new organization?

Pomeroy: Yes.

Morris: How many staff shifts were there? Did it mean that some jobs could be combined and some people were reassigned?

Pomeroy: Actually what happened, because we were physically located in San Francisco in the same building (UBAC by this time had come out to our UCF building on Steiner Street) the merging of the UBAC and UCF staff was relatively easy. What happened with respect to the other four counties was that the people who had been the directors of their respective funds became the UBAC program directors for Alameda, San Mateo, and Marin counties. Those four men were all retained in positions in their counties where they were in charge of that portion of the campaign that was to be carried out at the county level and each of them were given certain responsibilities with respect to the Bay Area campaign.

For example, Caulk in San Mateo County was responsible for those parts of the campaign that had to be physically conducted in San Mateo County. He also became the staff director for the public employees section of the Bay Area campaign and so he had to function in two places, at the headquarters and in San Mateo County. Wardley in Alameda County, the same thing was true; in addition to being responsible for Alameda County, I think he was also responsible for the middle section of the corporate campaign. I can't remember exactly what it was called.

Morris: Do you mean middle-sized corporations?

Pomeroy: Yes, not small business, Al Williams from Richmond got small business. Wardley had to have something larger than that. He hasn't changed a bit either; I was invited to lunch and he is still as expansive as always. I see no change! [laughs] He says there is no change in me either.

Morris: What were staff meetings like, with all of you who had been snapping at each other on various things now expected to be one happy family?

Pomeroy: Again, I have to pay tribute to Ray Baarts. If he saw any sign of anything except good, cooperative pulling together, he would make it his business to single out that person to stop and chat with him after the meeting. I would occasionally do my own share of being annoyed with somebody and Ray would unhesitatingly say, "Florette, wait just a minute, I want to talk to you for a minute." Then he'd say, "You really don't contribute very much if you allow somebody else's behavior to bring out the worst in you." He only had to say that to me a couple of times and I realized that I could play a very much more positive role by just never rising to their bait.

So to some extent I became, I think, somewhat of a conciliator and went to great lengths to avoid ever doing any snapping because we were pioneering. The man from Marin County, I think, felt the same way I did, Aubrey Burns, and always was gentle and-- [laughs] a dear person who worked well with us and wanted to. The same thing was true of Williams. The other two resented to the very end, I think, their loss of position.

Morris: Status?

Pomeroy: Status.

Morris: It's an interesting exercise in how people can work together in a situation in which none of them are terribly cordial with each other. One parallel that I've wondered about is how management and the union brass can, after a really nasty negotiating period, go back to working together in the same plant.

Pomeroy: Oh, I think that generally speaking, most of the time, all of the staff were able to accept their roles as they ended up. With the two who seemed to have the most difficulty in adjusting, it was only when some pet idea of theirs was being tromped on by everybody else that they became difficult and sometimes unpleasant.

Morris: But there was neutral territory on which you could--

Pomeroy: Oh, there was a lot of neutral territory. And in the final analysis what we would say is, "Look, if the volunteers can do this, we better be able to, too," because the volunteers had made the decision that they wanted this. Again in two counties, it was San Mateo and Alameda, there were a few people that didn't think that the best thing had been done in the interests of their own community and eventually they drifted away and did not remain a part of the structure.

Morris: Was there much turnover and did you have trouble recruiting new people coming in?

Pomeroy: No, not really.

New Planning Concerns of the 1960's

Morris: Then your agency relations had less and less to do with planning, because there was a separate Bay Area planning body?

Pomeroy: We had quite a bit to do with planning. Under the terms of the plan that was set up, UBAC was funding the Bay Area Social Planning Council with the understanding that staff members from BASPC were going to participate in the budgeting in order to bring planning knowledge and expertise to the budget panels. So we had quite a bit to do with BASPC and it became increasingly difficult to get the kind of participation we needed. Of course, I only had two years of that because I left--I had '66 and '67. But my impression is it became even more difficult later because BASPC moved much more in the direction of being a bay-wide study group and became less able to provide the continuing knowledge in the various fields that we needed for budgeting.

Morris: One of the theories that has raised some contention is to what extent the planning process was a form of control. Was that an issue that was debated at that time in the mid-sixties?

Pomeroy: Yes, I would say that there was certainly some concern because, particularly with respect to the admission of any new agencies, one of the requirements that the UBAC membership committee established was a planning council report on the need for the services, the quality of the services being provided, and the effectiveness of administration. Because we (UBAC) did not have our own planning organization to use for those kinds of study, we expected BASPC to provide that kind of help. That was early on perceived by particularly some of the emerging agencies (some of the black and Hispanic agencies) as a control mechanism that was going to keep them out of UBAC. The study process would be so exacting that they would never make it.

Morris: There is some truth to that.

Pomeroy: There is quite a bit of truth to it. This goes back to when we talked a little bit about priorities. We talked about the inability of the community to say, "This is obsolete, we don't need it any more in order to free up some money for something that we desperately need."

Morris: The needs as they were emerging by the '66-'67 period were of a different order than babies without milk or workers injured on the job.

Pomeroy: You bet they were. They had to do with, first of all, the need for some of the people living in poverty in certain sections of the city to find some basis from which they could make their needs known, providing a channel through which they could organize themselves in order to present themselves. The poverty program started to do this and indeed did quite a bit of it, but the community as a whole was not recognizing these kinds of needs.

It wasn't that the emerging needs were food, shelter, and clothing; they were not the emerging needs of the Depression. They were the needs that came from dislocated people unskilled, unable to work. Even if they could find a job, did they know how to do that job? The need for training, the need for resources in order to permit people to integrate themselves at some level, even the lowest economic level, into the community. These were the kinds of needs that the poverty program was beginning to address, but which the community as a whole didn't address. I think we deserved the criticism that came to us for our inability to share in meeting some of those needs.

Morris: And to make a place to accept those kinds of points of view and their representatives into the decision-making process.?

Pomeroy: Eventually, of course, UBAC had to come to this and did, with a good deal of courage after some pretty uproarious experiences.

Morris: You had already left by the time there were pickets at the United Crusade?

Pomeroy: Yes, I left in January of '68 and they did not begin to experience the real protests until about '71-'72.

Devoted Secretaries and Other Proteges

[Interview #10: August 11, 1982]##

Morris: In a press clipping on your appointment as head of the United Community Fund, there was a mention of your secretary, who had worked for you for thirty years. Should we mention her?

Pomeroy: Yes, she has a place in here somewhere. I had first worked with Shirley Harcourt in Los Angeles during the Depression years, when she worked in the program that was, I always thought, very interestingly titled the Division of Self Help Co-operatives. It was headed up nationally by Winslow Carlton, who was the son of the president or chairman of the board of Western Union and was a wonderful example of one of those young men who came out of Harvard and was determined to do something useful.

Morris: Change the world and be helpful.

Pomeroy: Yes. His director of the project in Los Angeles was Clark Kerr. I think it was before he even he had a master's degree or maybe he had a master's but not anything more. Also working on that program at that time was Kay, who was Clark's wife, and the first chancellor of Santa Cruz, Dean McHenry, and his wife, Jane. All four of those people had been classmates of Shirley Harcourt at Stanford—and she worked for them as a secretary.

Morris: That's almost an early Peace Corps.

Pomeroy: Yes, exactly. Shirley then came and worked with me in Sacramento when I became director of the State Relief Administration office up there and then when I went to Washington, she stayed here and she worked in other jobs. When I had been the first staff member for California Physicians here in its organizing days, Shirley came to work for us. Then I went off to Washington leaving her there and then I went to Europe and then came back, and after I became director of the Fund, Shirley had just left CPS. I begged her to come and at least help me out temporarily at the fund. She stayed there all the years I was the director and then when I left to go to the council [on alcoholism] she came with me.

Morris: [Was it] because you shared the same manner of working?

Pomeroy: Oh, because we had a lot of regard and affection and respect for each other. She was a brilliant person with a marvelous sense of humor and a great talent. She would attend a meeting and write a set of minutes that was superlative. No one in my experience has ever done them as well. She always took marvelous shorthand so that when you had a resolution that had been finely worded, she had every word of it. She left the office one afternoon at five o'clock and that night had a severe coronary attack and died at nine-thirty.

Morris: Isn't that a pity. No advance warning that you were aware of.

Pomeroy: No, none that I was aware of at all, and we were very close to the same age, within months of each other. So it was a loss that I felt very deeply. Shirley and I were close enough so that we had contemplated retirement and the possibility we could do some traveling together. She was a very special person in my life. But [laughs softly] the Lord takes care of fools and drunks and the person who followed her was Chie Okazaki, who had worked with Eva Hance as her secretary and was still at the Fund. She was interested in leaving there, came to me and stayed at the Council on Alcoholism as long as I was there. Not too long after I retired, she was offered a job as Martin Paley's secretary [at the San Francisco Foundation] and that's where she is.

Morris: It sounds like both Miss Harcourt and Miss Okazaki were a part of the actual administrative work being done; understood what it was about.

Pomeroy: Oh, very much so and took a great deal of responsibility.

Morris: That helps make an organization--

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, Chie was a very retiring person and her first doubt was "I can't follow in Shirley's footsteps," but I knew she could and she did.

Morris: Thank you for getting those two ladies in. That brings us around to where we were last time. I was wanting to ask you about some of the letters that I came across in your correspondence. I have selected some that reflect a couple of things. One was from a man named Warren Dobbs who talks about having learned much from you at the Crusade and he says you are a marvelous combination of commanding and feminine, which I thought was a good line.

Pomeroy: Yes, a nice compliment.

Morris: Was Mr. Dobbs somebody that you had particularly helped train?

Pomeroy: He came onto the Crusade scene, I think, via San Mateo County and after the merger was someone that I had involvement with through agency relations and his participation in budgeting and--

Morris: He came into the central staff of the successor five-county organization?

Pomeroy: In effect, everybody who remained on staff became part of the total Bay Area staff, and I don't remember whether Warren came physically into San Francisco or whether he continued to operate in San Mateo County.

Morris: The San Mateo district is what this memo says.

Pomeroy: All right, then he continued as a UBAC staff member and functioned in San Mateo County and I undoubtedly had involvement with him in connection with budget committees and probably some campaigning.

Morris: But not a formal--

Pomeroy: He was not a member of my immediate staff, no.

Morris: So that you did function kind of as an in-service training person.

Pomeroy: Yes, on a very informal basis.

Morris: Were there other people? He thought to write kindly about your relationship. Were there other people particularly that you felt that you had to bring to the front and give more responsibility?

Pomeroy: There is certainly the lady who currently is the director of agency relations for UBAC, Dorothy Rotondale. She has been there twenty-five years now. I am very proud to have had a hand in selecting her because she was a secretary in the budget office, and we gradually moved her along to become a staff person working with budget committees.

I would probably have difficulty, Gaby, pinpointing people that I felt that I had any great hand in-- I felt very free to poke my nose in almost anywhere in terms of trying to be helpful to new people. I had a close relationship with Jack Richmond. In one of those files there is a note from Jack about our relationship. He was the campaign director for UBAC. Another man who was a campaign director first on my staff and then with UBAC was Mike McCaffrey, who was tragically killed in a Bay Bridge accident.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform you that Mrs. Florette White Pomeroy has resigned her position as Director of Agency Relations at the United Crusade, to become Executive Director of the San Francisco Council on Alcoholism, effective January 1, 1967.

Mrs. Pomeroy's great contribution to this community through her several capacities in the United Crusade over the last fourteen years is well known to all of us. Her leadership and high talents will be greatly missed within the Crusade association but we are glad that her new post will keep her in this community.

As successor to Mrs. Pomeroy, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Miss Florence Scott, who will take over as Director of Agency Relations on January 1. Miss Scott presently is Marin County Director of the Bay Area Social Planning Council, formerly Executive Director of the Marin Council of Community Services, and previously served as Executive Director of Telegraph Hill Neighborhood House in San Francisco. Her training and experience in agency administration, community planning and budgeting, plus wide knowledge of the Bay Area community, provide exceptional qualification for the responsibilities encompassed within the Crusade Agency Relations Division. We can look forward to continued top standard staff leadership in this activity.

RAYMOND E. BAARTS

REB:rsv
October 26, 1967

XV CONCERN FOR IMPROVED ALCOHOL TREATMENT PROGRAMS; OPPORTUNITY
KNOCKS ##

SETTING UP THE COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM, 1958

Morris: Perhaps we could make a start today on your work with the National Council on Alcoholism. How did it get started in San Francisco?

Pomeroy: Yes. We sat in St. Clair's courtroom and held the first meeting. There was Austin MacCormick and Orla St. Clair and Marty Mann and myself.

Morris: Just the four of you?

Pomeroy: The four of us. I had sense enough to say at that point--because remember this was 1958, I am still relatively unknown in this community--and I said, "I think I can be most helpful if I serve as a volunteer consultant to you. I don't know what I can do, but I don't think I should be on the board."

In fact, I quickly made it a policy that so long as I worked for either UBAC or the United Community Fund, I served on the board of no agency. I thought that was reasonable. But I was a volunteer and I went to a number of early board meetings as that volunteer and sat with them and gradually got some other people, some recovering alcoholics, interested in being helpful.

Morris: What was Judge St. Clair's interest?

Pomeroy: A friend of Austin MacCormick's. Austin MacCormick was a distinguished criminologist and the author of books. He was the president and executive of the Osborn Foundation, which has been devoted to--Austin died just a year or so ago--prison reform. Austin was a professor at the U.C. School of Criminology.

- Morris: How did Mr. MacCormick and Marty Mann get together?
- Pomeroy: When Marty formed the national committee in New York, one of the people whom I think was on their first board was Austin. He probably came to that through his knowledge of and respect for AA, because he was beginning to see some potential for AA's in prison.
- Morris: By then was there statistical information about the number of people in prison involved with--?
- Pomeroy: Involved in alcoholism? How much statistical information that would have been collected by then I am not sure, but there probably was a general knowledge that Austin was sensitive to. He was a wonderful man. I became devoted to him.
- Morris: He must have been.
- Pomeroy: We had a lovely relationship. When I first went on the national board of NCA, Austin was still on the board.
- Morris: What was your first impression of Marty Mann?
- Pomeroy: She was, I would say, one of the most dramatic, intense, effective people that I have ever talked to. She had met Helen Russell because of an alcohol problem in the family in Washington, D.C. Because of that, Helen became almost her patroness when she came to San Francisco, introduced her to people and so forth.

Helen had a sense about people who could be important in the lives of other people and she respected that. She responded to the fact that Marty was really on a very serious mission, that alcoholism was very real, and that nobody was doing anything about it. Marty was a marvelous lady--persuasive, dynamic, I think antagonized no one, and to be able to do that--except maybe the liquor industry was furious with her! But what I'm thinking of is with business people, with educators. She ended up with honorary degrees from half a dozen institutions. She became internationally famous for her work; she was known literally all over the world. My early impressions of her were so positive. Her leadership was a very important factor in my interest in furthering the work of NCA.

The council in San Francisco was organized in 1958 and ten years later it hadn't really gone anywhere. It was very puny. It had one staff person and one secretary in two little rooms. It is what sort of motivated me to say, "I think I would like to see if I could make this go."

United Community Fund Programs and Reports

- Morris: There had been, as early as '62, a community workshop, a one-day affair on alcoholism that the United Community Fund co-sponsored.
- Pomeroy: Yes, that was more than a one-day affair, wasn't it? That was the thing we did up at Santa Rosa? Have you got the program for that?
- Morris: Here it is: "An inter-agency workshop concerned with program planning for alcoholism." It was a large conference, January 26, 27, and 28.* Dr. Averbach was the--
- Pomeroy: Yes, Alfred Averbach, a psychiatrist, was the chairman. He was chairman of our alcoholism committee of the United Community Fund. That committee certainly flourished because of my interest in alcoholism, it is fair to say. There had been a study requested by the Health Council of UCF, before I became director. It done by Irving Babow. It was ready for release very shortly after I became director of the Fund. I presided over the press conference that released it and obviously gave it much more interest and much more support than somebody else might have. I had no responsibility for the initiation of that study. That had come earlier, but I certainly was responsible for keeping the Health Council involved in alcoholism, for setting up a committee on alcoholism, for getting some money for the first staff assistance that was provided for the Health Council Committee on Alcoholism. Larry Kramer had just become a consultant and this was his first contract. Does his name appear in that program?
- Morris: There is a program participants' list in the back which does not include Larry Kramer. It does include Martin Paley.
- Pomeroy: All right, Martin was already director of the Health Council, you're right. I guess we must have gotten Larry Kramer involved later in the game.

*See appendix for title page and foreward.

Time of Transition

- Morris: What was going on at United Crusade that made '67 a good time to make a change?
- Pomeroy: It wasn't a good time from the standpoint of the Crusade. This was my choice. It was very much my choice.
- Morris: There are some indications that there were troubles. In that file of letters that you gave me there are a couple of things. One is a couple of notes I came across from Ray Baarts--he took a month's vacation and then I guess he was going to retire or resign.
- Pomeroy: Ray Baarts had a heart attack--I have forgotten the chronology of that now completely. But I remember Ray saying to me, "Florette, I am sorry you have decided you want to do this because I wanted to take early retirement and now I don't think I can."
- Morris: He said this after he had his heart attack?
- Pomeroy: Yes, he had had his heart attack and was back on the job. He ultimately took early retirement.
- Morris: Probably that year because John Neukom was already head of a search committee.
- Pomeroy: Ray did retire probably by the end of '68, didn't he?
- Morris: Yes. [pause to go through papers] ## I gather that you wrote to what Joe Blumlein referred to as your inner circle, of which he was pleased to be a member, telling them in November--
- Pomeroy: That I was leaving.
- Morris: That you were going to leave and talking a little bit about what you were going to be doing.
- Pomeroy: That was probably all of my past presidents and anybody who I had worked with through the UCF days on into UBAC.
- Morris: He commented that something of value was lost in the transition from UCF to UBAC, and then Dr. Benson Roe referred to his understanding of why you might want to leave the Crusade in light of the current situation. Was part of your decision to go to the Council the fact that there were some stresses and strains?

Pomeroy: No, not really; no, no. No, my motivation was entirely the idea that this was the thing that I perhaps could do that I didn't see anybody else around who would be likely to do it.

Morris: Was there some concern that maybe you should have been given the top job at UBAC and some resistance to--?

Pomeroy: I think there certainly was concern on the part of some people that I should have. I never felt that as long as Ray Baarts was there.

If I had not made the decision that I wanted to see what we could do with the Council and Ray Baarts had retired, if I had not then been tapped to head up the Crusade when Ray Baarts had retired, I would have felt that it was probably discrimination on the basis of being a woman. But I had not experienced that because when they brought Ray Baarts in to head up UBAC it was done with what I considered to be a lot of wisdom in terms of bringing a qualified, experienced community type person from the outside so that they were not going to be caught up in the East Bay-West Bay-San Mateo-Marín County sense of turf. I had total admiration for the choice they made of Ray Baarts to head it up and I would not have been a candidate at that point under any circumstances. I had only been back in San Francisco for a couple of years--three years--and, as I say, I was no way a candidate at that time.

Morris: But then coming up to '67-'68 when you did go to the Council, there is a rumor that Morty Fleishhacker was not in favor of having a woman as executive and that this may have caused some problems.

Pomeroy: If that rumor existed, I didn't hear it because I was not influenced.

Planning and Revitalizing the Council

Pomeroy: If you look back (and I would have to go way back in date books and things), I sat with John May and Sanford Treguboff as my two colleagues and close friends to plan what I would do in connection with the development of the Council: I did this for over a year before I ever talked to Ray Baarts about it. We considered ourselves the unholy three, and part of our planning process was for

me to determine what kind of support I could look for from leadership. The people that I selected to talk to were Fred Merrill, Mrs. Robert Watt Miller, Mrs. Allan Charles [pause to recall names] There were five people involved. Emmett Solomon. And Morty Fleishhacker.

The group of five that I talked to initially were not the people from whom I sought financial support. They were the people that I went to ask whether they would in effect endorse my effort to build and strengthen the Council and really to test whether or not they felt that I would be disloyal, if you like, to UBAC to leave to go and do this other thing that I wanted to do.

They were each in their own way very interesting because each one of them said that "we really don't like to see you leave UBAC; we feel you have made an important contribution and that it has been important to San Francisco that you had the relationship with Ray Baarts that you had, but if this is what you want to do, you have earned the right to do it." That kind of encouragement is what moved me forward. Any one of them could have stopped me, because if any one of them had said, "Oh, I don't think you should; I think that's wrong, really wrong," and had some good reason for saying so, I would have backed off.

Morris: Were there any of the five who were particularly encouraging and said, "You are the right person to do this and it's time that we really did something about the alcoholism services?"

Pomeroy: Caroline Charles, of course, because I had a year or so before persuaded her to go on the board of the Council and she saw nothing happening nor the likelihood of anything happening and so she was very encouraging.

Morris: How about Judge Levin?

Pomeroy: Judge Gerry [Gerald] Levin had been recruited by his predecessor Judge St. Clair as a board member of the Council. Gerry Levin was a very interesting, very, very talented judicial mind; a brilliant, brilliant man, and had become extremely interested in alcoholism. I never knew what the origin of his interest might have been except that he himself did not drink. I knew that. He was chairman of the committee on alcoholism for the American Bar Association.

Morris: Yes, a long-standing committee.

Pomeroy: Yes, but as a community person he did not function in the kind of leadership role that you needed. He did absolutely everything himself. When there was to be a luncheon meeting of the board, he would personally call the hotel and make the arrangements for the meeting.

Morris: This is while he was sitting on the district court?

Pomeroy: He was a superior court judge, at that time. It was he who had originally brought Clinton Duffy in to be the executive of the Council. You had a marvelous human being in Clinton Duffy who had not an iota of knowledge about how to operate in a community setting; just none whatever.

Morris: Even from his own administrative experience as head of San Quentin?

Pomeroy: There you told staff what to do; you didn't have volunteers.

Morris: At that point there weren't any advisory committees to the prison and things like that?

Pomeroy: No, and this was one of the reasons, I am sure, that Gerry Levin felt so comfortable with him, was because they operated in much the same way. There was absolutely no board or committee activity. These men simply did whatever they thought needed doing.

Morris: In terms of the Council's activity--

Pomeroy: In terms of the Council's activity and the volunteers. The board members came to a meeting once a month and were all told what was going on and they all nodded sagely and said, "Isn't that wonderful?"

Morris: At that point was there any staff to the Council?

Pomeroy: Clinton Duffy was the paid executive and he had a secretary. Then Clinton Duffy left after he had written his book about San Quentin.* It had nothing to do with alcoholism. Then a young man was hired who had been in Hawaii with the planning council, Martin Kovitz. Marty was very knowledgeable about how you work with volunteers and so on. His problem was he didn't know anything about alcoholism. He and the judge sort of arm-wrestled a bit and then Marty went on. He was only there about a year and a half and

 *The San Quentin Story, Clinton T. Duffy, as told to Duffy Jennings, Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1950.

he went on to something else. Then a man by the name of Charles Stern who had been with the Cancer Society was hired, and all of this done was very much by Gerry Levin without--

Morris: No board committee to--

Pomeroy: No board committee to interview candidates or anything like that.

Morris: Were you getting more and more restive under this?

Pomeroy: I kept watching this and thinking "that poor Council, is it ever going to get off the ground?" And years had gone by. About the time that Charles Stern was hired, I really felt great distress because here was another man with no knowledge of alcoholism, no indication of any background in the field. I could not perceive the possibility of a volunteer structure being molded. That was about the time that I began to sit down with my good friends, Treguboff and May, and tell them what I really would like to do, and say "do you think this is crazy?"

Morris: At that point, John May was--

Pomeroy: Director of the San Francisco Foundation; Treguboff was director of the Jewish Welfare Federation. As I say, they were great, good friends. Most of our planning was done over at Jack's [restaurant] at lunches.

Morris: Has anybody ever given Jack's restaurant credit for being the seat of so much civic endeavor?

Pomeroy: I don't think so, [laughs] but we should! The conclusion that I had come to was that the only way somebody could start out and try to do an effective building job with the council was if they could raise some money as a committed sum that you would have for staff, because the budget of the Council was then under thirty thousand a year, which paid for a director and a secretary and some rent. I had been--

Morris: No money for any kind of action or education?

Pomeroy: No, no. I had been partially responsible for getting the Council moved out of a location down on McAllister Street where it was in a building owned by a religious organization. Well, that is a pretty crummy location to which you were not going to get very many middle class people seeking information about alcoholism.

Morris: Was that kind of a leftover from the idea of getting the services where the need was?

Pomeroy: No, I think it was just a matter that this was someplace where you could get very low rent and provide a place to operate. But I knew that there was probably some space available at the Pacific Medical Center in the old nurses' building there that they were converting into offices.

Fred Merrill at that time was chairman of the board of Presbyterian and so through Fred we got space made available up there that we rented. So I had a hand in moving the Council before Stern actually came to work for them. As a matter of fact, that was when Marty Kovitz was director.

Building Financial Support

Pomeroy: I started looking for support without any consultation with Stern and without any consultation with Judge Levin, because I didn't think he would be very supportive of the idea. I was not going to raise what I called a dowry for the Council and then hand it over to somebody else. Caroline Charles knew what I was doing; she was a board member and she agreed that until I was prepared to say, "Yes, there is this amount of money available and, yes, I want to come and be the executive of the Council," that I should not disturb the judge. So we didn't disturb the judge, and marvelous people lent their support to this and made pledges. A proposal was submitted to the San Francisco Foundation.

Morris: Okay, now that's interesting technically. Nowadays, if you take a proposal to a foundation or a government-granting agency, your proposal has to have the okay of the board--

Pomeroy: The endorsement of the board of directors, of course!

Morris: How did you do this number with the San Francisco Foundation? (Excuse me, let me turn over this tape.)

##

Pomeroy: I cannot remember and there must be still more documents somewhere. I must have kept a copy of that original proposal because I had it around, I know, all the years that I was at the council,

and I am sure that I did not throw it out when I moved down here. But I cannot remember under what--there must have been a point at which we took it to the board.*

Morris: As a five-year plan?

Pomeroy: As a five-year plan for the development and the expansion of the Council on Alcoholism.

Morris: Right, asking the Foundation to put up the matching--?

Pomeroy: Yes, we asked the Foundation to put up a grant that would be matched and our goal was a total of \$125,000 over a five-year period. The foundation portion of it was a declining grant, and we got commitments from individuals that totalled \$15,000 a year for five years.

Morris: Do you remember whether this was, from John's point of view, an innovation for the foundation to think in terms of a long-term matching support?

Pomeroy: [pause] I think it probably was, although the Foundation may have made some other--I don't know. I am not sure John would remember any more. My recollection is that this was pretty innovative as far as the Foundation was concerned at that time. This would have been 1967 that we were doing the planning.

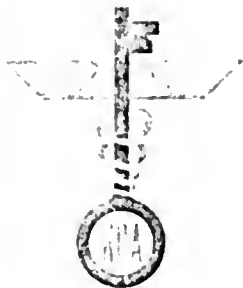
Morris: Was Fireman's Fund at that point as an insurance group concerned about the economic impacts of alcoholism and the actuarial--?

Pomeroy: My guess is that Fred Merrill had no difficulty with the board of the company foundation which, of course, was made up entirely of Fireman's Fund executives with the rationale of insurance company interests. I think what it really was that it spoke to was the fact that there wasn't anything being done in alcoholism and that it was important as a community concern.

Morris: With Mr. Merrill reflecting the community concern?

Pomeroy: Yes, yes.

*See illustration next page, memo "New Development Program of the Council," Gerald S. Levin to board of directors, October 25, 1967.



NATIONAL COUNCIL on ALCOHOLISM—SAN FRANCISCO AREA

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San Francisco, California 94115

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October 25, 1967

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Directors

FROM: Judge Gerald S. Levin

SUBJECT: New Development Program of the Council

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Council, I am pleased to announce the inauguration of a new Development Program of the Council.

This will mean a substantial enlargement of the working program of the Council. The San Francisco Foundation has made a grant of \$50,000 prorated over a five-year period commencing January 1, 1968, provided that matching funds be obtained. There is assurance that these funds will be forthcoming.

Mrs. Florette W. Pomeroy, who has served the Council in an informal consulting capacity over the years, will join the Council as Executive Director effective January 1, 1968.

Additional details will be discussed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on Thursday, November 9, 1967 (see the attached announcement).

Morris: That's really interesting because in the material at the Council that I read, one of the issues seemed to be to get insurance companies to cover alcohol treatment.

Pomeroy: It still is.

Morris: Right, and the insurance industry as a group has over the years put out a lot of stuff about how one should look after social problems because they affect productivity and your insurance rates.

Pomeroy: Yes, I don't think that at that point in time with Fireman's Fund, this was not evidence of sufficient interest that was going to result in any change of their coverage as a health insurance factor.

Morris: I guess what I am interested in is how a corporate foundation makes its decisions and whether it is responding to the information that they have developed in terms of how the corporation works as opposed to whether it is, as you suggested, the personal weight and prestige of the directors.

Pomeroy: It's my impression over the years, looking at the actions of corporate foundations, that often grants are influenced by the interests of their executives. Its understandable. People's judgments are influenced by what they know and care about.

Morris: The executives, yes.

Pomeroy: Their grantmaking is not totally a reflection of their corporate social-responsibility posture. In the case of Levi Strauss, which I have come to know extremely well, most of their grants are a direct reflection of their corporate social-responsibility policies.

Morris: On the basis of a considered judgment as to what is going on?

Pomeroy: Yes, and careful examination. There are other corporate foundations that indeed function in somewhat the same way, but that is not universal. For example, there is one corporate foundation that I will not name in which the executive has said, "We make our grants on the basis of what we think is going to do this corporation the most good." That isn't corporate responsibility.

Morris: Historians talk about the doctrine of enlightened self-interest, of benevolent despotism.

Pomeroy: Yes, it's all of those things.

Morris: So from that point of view, it becomes more important from the social-responsibility angle to try and have concerned people, educated in those decision-making spots.

Pomeroy: Absolutely, absolutely, and there certainly are indications--looking just at the Bay Area--there are indications of a growing interest on the part of corporate foundations in improving their examination and assessment processes. In my opinion, it comes out of the enlightenment, if you like, of corporate boards and chief executive officers as they have a greater sense of the role that their company can play in the community. I think they are motivated to do it in the most professional manner possible and not as a quid pro quo. Just because the executive of another corporation had made a grant to something that you are interested in, you don't want to feel obliged to go and make a grant to something he is interested in. There is an impact from the current federalism that is being felt.

Morris: Because of the current 1981-82 pressure for corporations in the private sector to pick up more funding of social programs?

Pomeroy: Yes. There is an excellent speech that was made by the chairman of the board of Foremost McKesson, Tom Drohan, "Reaganomics and the Cheshire Cat." I will get you a copy of it because it really looks at it from the standpoint of a business leader. St Mary's College at Moraga has an annual event, which brings together leadership from the business community around the country as well as the Bay Area, and Drohan made this speech there this year. It is, I think, one of the most thoughtful assessments of what the private sector can do, particularly the corporate segment of the private sector.

Morris: The other sources, besides Fireman's Fund, for getting your development plan to work, from the list I found in the archives, looked like people with whom you might have worked in the Crusade's advance-gift section.

Pomeroy: Sure, largely that--I mean Betty Miller, a thousand dollars a year for five years; Madeline Russell, the same thing, I guess. I think I had about ten thousand-dollar-a-year donors for that.

Morris: Contingent on the Foundation grant?

Pomeroy: Yes, it was matching--it was a commitment to help match.

Morris: You were keeping these eggs all in the air?

Pomeroy: Yes, I was juggling quite a platter full of promises and commitments.

Morris: Were you encouraging these people, individual donors, to make these gifts in addition to their commitment to the United Way?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, it was made very clear that this was a community venture that needed doing, but it wouldn't get done unless somebody took hold of it, and before I could walk away from the security of the United Bay Area Crusade, I had to have some assurance--.

It was very interesting. I volunteered to take a very substantial cut in salary. I am vague now, but I would say that I was at a point where I was making about twenty-two or twenty-three thousand dollars at UBAC and I was talking about taking a cut to 17.5 or something like that.

Fred Merrill pounced on me and said, "That's ridiculous. You are taking hard earned experience and you're worth it. If this job is worth doing, it's worth being paid for," and so I think I ended up taking about a \$2,500 a year cut in order to do it.

Morris: What happened to things like your pension benefits?

Pomeroy: Interestingly enough, I had, when Marty Kovitz was there, had urged the Council to adopt a benefits to set up a benefit program including participation in the National Health and Welfare Retirement Association, which we were able to include the Council in, even though it was not a UBAC member. So I was able to transfer my participation in that plan to the Council.

Morris: That worked as coverage for professional people who were likely to move from one agency to another?

Pomeroy: That's right. That was the original scheme for the National Health and Welfare Retirement [Association], and it's aligned with the National Teachers' Program.

Morris: How far back does that go?

Pomeroy: I had participated in it from my day one when I became a permanent employee of UBAC, but it went back much farther than that. I would say probably back to the forties.

On Religious Groups and Social Planning

Morris: There is one last letter I would like to ask you to comment on because I would like to hear a little bit about Don Fazackerly. His name turns up throughout all of these assorted minutes from

different committees and groups that you worked with. You apparently sent him this advance letter of your plans. Did it include a sort of a summary of what you were hoping to accomplish with the Council? He says he has read the proposal with interest and it reflects the common situation with voluntary organizations of a lot of program zeal but a great amount of fiscal apathy. I thought that was a rather--

Pomeroy: It's fascinating.

Morris: It was friendly, but--

Pomeroy: I wonder what I was doing sending Don the proposal? I'm curious.

Morris: [reading] "I have skimmed your letter of October 24 and I have now read the proposal provided. Having been exposed to this program and financing problems a few months ago, I agree that you are the kind of medicine they need to get going. They have the usual problem of lots of program zeal combined with fiscal apathy and ignorance." That's October of 1967. "Let me know how I can help, as long as I don't have to go on the wagon."

Pomeroy: [laughs] Cute Don, yes! Well, as I say, I'm kind of fascinated that I--maybe because Don was a friend of long, long standing. He had been on the board of the United Community Fund, had been a past president of the Community Chest continued on the board of the Community Fund and had been involved in UBAC all the way through.

Morris: Yes, and he had been on social planning committees; in the minutes I found interesting comments.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, very active on social planning, a great supporter of Eva Hance, and a major link with the Roman Catholic community. Eva had been so very astute in developing support for the planning process in the Jewish community, the Catholic community, and to the extent that you could find it, in the Protestant community.

Morris: Were there some blocks to the various religious affiliates being involved in--?

Pomeroy: The only issue that ever threatened to split the social-planning process was Planned Parenthood as far as the Catholic community was concerned. With difficulty but successfully, Eva managed to keep that from ever coming to the front as a major issue. She negotiated behind a lot of closed doors, I suspect, to get people

of really good heart who resented the fact that because of Catholic influence, Planned Parenthood could not be included in the Crusade. I had my one go-around on that, too. There was always, about every five years, there was a very serious effort made.

Morris: To bring Planned Parenthood--?

Pomeroy: To bring Planned Parenthood into the crusade and into the social-planning structure and the Catholic community just said with aplomb, "It's them or us."

Morris: If you bring in Planned Parenthood, we'll--?

Pomeroy: We'll have to take the Catholic charities out of the Crusade and out of the social-planning process and do it on our own. You looked at that in San Francisco and you looked at the strength of the leadership in the Catholic community and you had to say, "This is a time when principles get compromised in the interest of the greatest good for the greatest number." It was not a very comfortable position to be in or decision to make.

Morris: Where did Mr. Fazackerly stand on this particular Planned Parenthood issue?

Pomeroy: I think if Don had had to--Don was very active in all of the Catholic leadership and if he had had to take a position, he would have had to support the position of the archdiocese.

I think I shared with Eva a certain amount of satisfaction in negotiating in such a manner that it never came to a formal vote at the planning council or on the board of either United Community Fund or UBAC.

Morris: How about the Planned Parenthood people? How did you deal with them to keep them from blowing the whole thing wide open as it were?

Pomeroy: Simply and really in pretty frank terms: "We recognize the importance and the value of what you are doing. We are in a community where a religious influence is very strong in this one area and the greatest good for the greatest number suggests that we should not push for your admission."

Morris: And they learned to accept that?



Clockwise from top left:

Mrs. Pomeroy (circled) at her "last big UBAC meeting hostessing-PR" [Ray Baarts] at fund campaign luncheon, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, 1967.

Mrs. Pomeroy receiving Jefferson Award for service benefitting the community from editor Reg Murphy, on behalf of the *San Francisco Examiner* and the American Institute of Public Service, 1978.

Dedication of the new California College of Podiatric Medicine, ca. 1973. San Francisco Supervisor John Molinari, Mrs. Pomeroy, Assemblyman Willie Brown.

Mrs. Pomeroy addressing the dedication audience with customary forthrightness and vigor.



Pomeroy: Yes, they kind of backed off. I must say that I did a number of things to be helpful to them. I would go and meet with their board. I did fundraising seminars for them--as an individual--which, I think, [chuckles] probably came as a bit of a surprise to some of my Catholic friends.

XVI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM--
BAY AREA, 1968-1975

Judge Gerald Levin: Early Diversion Programs

Morris: How did Judge Levin take this idea when--?

Pomeroy: When it was finally presented to him?

Morris: As a more or less--

Pomeroy: Fait accompli?

Morris: Yes.

Pomeroy: With a degree of--he accepted it in terms of having been well aware of my deep interest in the Council from the very beginning. I would say Caroline was more responsible than anybody else for making him see the value that could come from having somebody with my kind of community background and experience and desire to build a viable organization.

Morris: Yes, she was pretty good at bringing people together and saying, "Now, look, all you people really need to take a look at this and this is what you ought to do."

Pomeroy: Yes, she was marvelous. And she provided that kind of leadership on the Council board. The actual process of helping Judge Levin learn how to use an executive was really--it was a strain, God bless his soul. The first time that I called up and said, "I have made the arrangements for this meeting," "Oh," he said, "I thought I should do that." I said, "Gerry, I'm sorry, but you are really going to have to learn what an executive is for. I don't think you have had the right kind of from people who work for you."

Morris: How do you get somebody to accept the idea of delegation and then--?

Pomeroy: My sense is that this was a complete workaholic. This man had, to my knowledge, no recreational interests of any kind, color, or description. You could find him in his office at the court from about seven o'clock in the morning until ten or eleven o'clock at night, and when he wasn't on the bench, he was in his office. Of course he had a court clerk and he had a bailiff, but I am sure that he did a great deal of his own drafting of material and handwritten documents. And the Council was only one of a number of volunteer activities that he was involved in.

Morris: I gather that he had been responsible for starting a school--when people came to court on drug and alcohol-related charges, he set up a program whereby they went to school rather than going to jail.

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, he was very much responsible for the development of that. I guess that may have started when Clinton Duffy was at the Council and Gerry may have started it then. Yes, and I was down at the Hall of Justice one night a week.

Morris: You actually led the classes?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, for at least the first year, and got some volunteers to work in it, too, but I was there. My recollection is that we did that on Wednesday nights for the first year. That continued until we started the drunk driving school.

Morris: How did they differ?

Pomeroy: The focus with that one night course was simply on alcoholism.

Morris: Using the AA kind of information?

Pomeroy: Yes, and without nearly as much actual educational process involved as came later when we set up the first drunk driving school in Marin County.

Morris: Was the court school and the drunk driving school your priority for a program and activity of the Council--

Pomeroy: No, I recognized the court school as being a very useful and desirable thing in terms of enlisting the interest and support and cooperation of the judges in the work of the Council. It was also useful in that it provided a place where you exposed people who had been arrested for drunkenness to some knowledge about alcoholism and the possibility of their getting some help.

New Priorities and Staff

Pomeroy: The priority as I saw it in the Council was really twofold. One was to build and strengthen the information and referral service to do two things: just to see that the office was adequately staffed and publicized so that people knew it was there; and secondly, to reach out to groups in the community where you might have the possibility of doing some informational work like service clubs and church organizations and any groups where you could have the opportunity of presenting a program on alcoholism and to work with the schools as part of the extension of better knowledge and information in the community.

Then the other priority that I saw early on was the development of an employee assistance program that would carry--and this came about because NCA nationally was doing extensive promotion work for getting employee for alcoholism programs in industry. The first position that I felt we had to fill, apart from having a counselor and a secretary in the office, was that of an industrial specialist, and that was a position we filled about the middle of the year, within six months of my taking over.

Morris: With the increased funding you could then expand your staff?

Pomeroy: Yes, and we hired Bill Livingston.

Morris: Where did you find him?

Pomeroy: He was known to a socialworker friend of mine, Julie Bloomfield.

Morris: Mr. Livingston was making a specialty of--?

Pomeroy: Mr. Livingston had not yet made a specialty. I can't remember now what experience he brought to us. He had done some work in rehabilitation, I believe. ## One reason for bringing him in was my wish to avoid turning the council into an AA branch office. It was so identified in the minds of many people, the general public, members of Alcoholics Anonymous, and I went to great lengths because I had been extremely active in AA.

At the time I went to the Council, I was serving as chairman of a central service committee of AA in San Francisco for the Bay Area, and I withdrew from all AA-identified activities. I continued my own personal participation in AA, but I withdrew from any overt AA activity because I had to clarify for people the fact that AA and the National Council were two separate things and to

this day people will say of me "she is very big in AA." I was not very big in AA; I was very big in the Council. I was the Council for a while.

So that was a factor involved in employing Bill Livingston, because he was not a recovered alcoholic, but had a great desire to learn, a great sympathy, a great empathy; and he proved to be a very good choice.

Morris: There was was somebody named Hamilton from the San Mateo Council and somebody named Mr. Bravinder.

Pomeroy: Jack Bravinder was a board member who was with the Telephone Company, served as chairman of an industrial alcoholism committee for the Council. Hub Hamilton was a director of a Council effort in San Mateo County which had never really gotten off the ground.

Morris: Yes, Santa Clara County had had some pretty awful organiztional problems it sounded like.

Pomeroy: Oh, Santa Clara County, they had problems related really to the misuse of county alcoholism funds down there which were quite horrendous. Yes, that's later on.

Industrial Program Success

Morris: Then this is from council minutes of August 18, 1969. There was a Ross von Weigand from the national NCA staff who was out helping putting together this industrial--

Pomeroy: Ross was the national director of what NCA called--it had different names at different times, but it's an employee alcoholism program. Ross came out to participate in--to be involved when? That was--

Morris: In 1969. This is in connection with what sounds like a marvelous bit of organizing at the University of San Francisco to set up a labor management school.

Pomeroy: Yes, I think Ross probably came out to help us launch an employee assistance training program within the well known USF Labor-Management school. He was also providing the kind of field service that a national organization provides to its local affiliates in terms of advice, suggestion, training, that sort of thing.

Morris: Were they of major assistance to you or were you going to do those things anyhow?

Pomeroy: Yes, we would have done them with or without. Ross was very knowledgeable, a former college professor, and very useful in the educational scene whenever you got into that kind of a setting.

The relationship between the National Council and its local affiliates has always been a pretty sketchy thing, as often is true. National organizations, particularly relatively new ones, are struggling for support and it's always very much which has to come first, the chicken or the egg. The national council wants support from its local affiliates and in order to justify getting that support, they need to provide some kind of service, but they don't have the money with which to provide the service.

Morris: And they need the local support in order to develop--

Pomeroy: Yes, and we never felt that we were able to adequately support the national. We also never felt that we got enough help from the national to make support of the national a priority concern, and that continues to this day.

Morris: Was the industrial alcoholism program one that got good response in the various communities you were working in?

Pomeroy: Yes. We concentrated the industrial program initially in San Francisco, and our first really great success was the fact that Dr. Gordon Richmond, who was the medical director of Standard Oil, attended a workshop that was put on in Alameda County for employers. How he got from San Francisco to Alameda County, neither he nor we were ever sure we knew. He attended that workshop and subsequently called us and said, "I'd like to talk to somebody about getting some help in developing a program in Standard Oil of California."

Morris: My goodness, that's the sort of thing you dream about.

Pomeroy: Yes, absolutely. So we made Bill put on a coat and tie and sent him down to talk to Dr. Richmond. The outcome after several meetings and planning was that, based on guides that we got from our national organization, we did a study for Standard Oil which gave Richmond a basis for going to top management, because he had some facts and figures based on an analysis of absenteeism, overuse of sick leave, etcetera. There were a number of factors that could be looked at in a study without ever pinpointing alcoholism. Without having knowledge of whether or not there was an alcohol problem, you could find a behavior pattern in the records of some people that suggested that alcohol could be the problem and it had to do with absenteeism, overuse of sick leave, supervisory warnings about production, and that sort of thing.

Bill had gotten help. This was one area in which Ross von Weigand and his office were very helpful. They had provided all of the data from which Bill could design the study for Standard Oil, and then Bill went in and did it. In those days, there was no using of computerized records. It was a by-hand examination of records on a very confidential basis. As a result of this study and Bill's further work with Richmond, the program was set up.

Morris: Designed more around the absenteeism and sick leave rather than "we're going to rout out alcoholism."

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, designed entirely on the basis of--and this was the NCA approach from the very beginning. You were not looking for alcoholics. You were looking for deteriorating job performance, and if you found deteriorating job performance, you had to assume that there was some factor involved in that employee's life that was affecting his or her job performance and so you made a referral to a counselor, not for any specific problem but because the employee was having trouble on the job and, therefore, was in effect ultimately jeopardizing the job. In the hands of the counselor perhaps information can come out indicating what the area is in which the employee needs help. One major factor involved in that kind of a program, and it remains a problem to this day, is to keep supervisors with their eye on the proper ball and that is job performance and not getting into--

Morris: Whatever is going on.

Pomeroy: Whatever is going on. Don't diagnose alcoholism; it's none of your business. What you are concerned about is that an employee's job performance is suffering and you are going to ultimately be faced with telling the employee that whatever the problem is, it's got to be straightened out, or they are going to have to be fired.

For many companies--I think it's changed--but for many companies we would talk to them about whether or not they would be willing to look at the possibility of developing an employee assistance program of some kind and they would say, "Oh, we have a policy. We just fire alcoholics." That was their policy.

Morris: For alcoholism, not for not getting the work out.

Pomeroy: That's right, for being a drunk. Of course, there is a good deal of change, but it is going very slowly still.

Morris: That is quite an undertaking.

Pomeroy: Very exciting. I always felt that one of the most worthwhile things that we were doing had to do with the introduction of employee-assistance programs in the workplace because in effect we

were wholesaling what we were trying to do on a retail basis with the general public. If you can reach a large number of people with an employee assistance program--Standard Oil, of course, had ten thousand employees---you are disseminating information more effectively than with, for example, posters.

There is the fact that in the case of Standard Oil, which was our pride and joy, we were seriously handicapped for several years because senior management was not willing to have any public announcement of the fact that they had an employee alcohol assistance program because they felt their stockholders might not understand. It was a red letter day, probably five years after the program was installed, that Dr. Richmond got permission to talk about it publicly. Eventually the company set forth a fine policy statement which was one of the very early ones in the Bay Area which recognized alcohol problems as a health problem and provided for the necessary counseling and assistance for any body who needed that help.

Morris: So that you were indeed having an impact on the general public consciousness when you got that kind of a change.

Pomeroy: Yes, oh, yes, I think that something good was happening, yes.

Board and Organizational Changes

Morris: What about other people on the Council board of directors, executive committee? did you have a problem convincing them, too, that you should execute and they should provide policy guidance? I have a 1969 list which includes a Dr. Gordon, and a Dr. Hugo Moeller as vice-chairman.

Pomeroy: Well, if you look at, except for Gerry Levin--oh, who in the world was Hugo Moeller? I'm horrified. There he is right plum on a letterhead and I can't remember one thing about him. Oh, Gaby, you're doing this not a day too soon! [laughs]

Morris: I would hate to be asked the same questions, may I say!

Pomeroy: Well, that one defeats me. Everybody else I can identify. Pat Costello, Jack Mailliard, who else have we got there? Those are the officers. Jack Gordon is around to this day, a marvelous human being.

Morris: Those are the only officers. I am running down the list here. Francis Keesling is somebody that turns up in the minutes quite often.

Pomeroy: Frank Keesling was president of West Coast Life Insurance Company, a great friend of Gerry Levin, and an experienced community person.

Morris: Then I gathered that Lieutenant General Richardson was not terribly experienced.

Pomeroy: No, and I'm not sure just how we got him, but he was a most willing workhorse. He was from Marin County, too.

Morris: Yes, he lived in Greenbrae. There are several discussions in the minutes about the importance of getting a really strong person as chairman of the finance committee to take up the work that you had begun in raising matching money, foundation money, and then Richardson resigned after about a year. He wrote, "Florette, you have been doing all of the work and I am such a novice in the community." It looked like he was starting some kind of an employment agency for the retired military.

Pomeroy: Yes, in fact, I think that is exactly what he did.

Morris: Was he the first choice as finance chairman.

Pomeroy: No, he was not the first choice by any means. You know who the first choice would have been, somebody like Jack Mailliard or people well known in the community; I think we got him by default.

Morris: Mrs. Costello and Mr. Mailliard are well-known names around San Francisco. Were they able to take on a real leadership role?

Pomeroy: Oh, and did Jack become the chairman.

Morris: Yes, when Judge Levin went to the appellate court.

Pomeroy: After Gerry Levin had been chairman for I don't know how many years, for goodness sake. Part of it was the process to arrive at some kind of a changing of the guard. You know what the story is when you have a board. Where the leadership remains static, you gradually lose more and more board members because there is no place for them to go. It was Caroline again who was primarily responsible for helping to bring about that change. The only way that we could bring about the change gracefully was with Caroline persuading Jack Mailliard that the judge would be happy to see Jack move up.

Morris: Was it fortuitous that Judge Levin went to the appellate court or did somebody talk to somebody and say, "We need to have a new chairman of the Council. We'll get him a new job so that he has a reason to resign."

- Pomeroy: No, and I don't remember that he felt that going to the appellate court was a reason to resign. I think, and I'm not sure what the magic was that Caroline used--
- Morris: Was Mr. Mailliard willing to take on the chairmanship?
- Pomeroy: He was willing to take on the chairmanship based on the fact that he was very fond of me, he was very fond of Caroline--he adored Caroline--and recognized that we had to bring about change. I think his original agreement was that he would do it for one year. I think he did it for two and then we had to get somebody else.
- Morris: Once you had gotten that change initiated, then it was easier to have a flow of--?
- Pomeroy: Yes, then we talked definitely in terms of two one-year terms for the chairman, and we talked about rotating it around the bay because by this time we had become a Bay Area organization.
- Morris: Was it as difficult to bring about an amalgamation of the local chapters of NCA as it had been in the United Crusade?
- Pomeroy: There was practically--as was true with UBAC, Alameda County was the most difficult one to bring in. There was not anything of any significance going on in Contra Costa. There had been a Council incorporated over there, but it was totally dormant. In fact, we were organizing a local committee over there before we ever discovered there was a corporation in existence. There had not been anything in Marin County, so we had no problems there. San Mateo County was very dormant and we had trouble there because there were a few people who felt that they should retain their local autonomy and did not want to be a part of Bay Area venture. But they didn't have any money.
- Morris: Mr. Hamilton was a volunteer?
- Pomeroy: Mr. Hamilton was a volunteer, yes.
- Morris: From communications from him, he sounds like a very competent fellow.
- Pomeroy: Yes, he was, but he also was another person who didn't have--he was a recovered alcoholic, a businessman, and had no sense of community organization whatever. We were plagued with a fair number of people in that category.
- Morris: Community organization as a professional body of skills was just emerging at that point, but there were people who knew it by instinct?

Pomeroy: Yes. But there were also people who had some experience in mobilizing groups of volunteers for various kinds of activity, people who had been connected with the Heart Association, the Cancer Society, with TB, even with United Way and some social planning organizations. But when you found people with no background of that kind of experience and yet a commitment to the cause of alcoholism, you had real problems. They were marvelous about doing certain things themselves, but they didn't have any experience to draw on that helped them move other people into activity.

One of the things that we were committed to (and the board of the San Francisco Area Council reflects it) was that this should not be an organization that appeared to be dominated by recovered alcoholics. It was important to have community leadership that gave credibility to the importance of the cause, not because of their personal experience with the drug, alcohol, but because they recognized it as a community problem. Most of the councils around the country when Marty Mann did her organizing primarily had recovered alcoholics as the leading figures.

Morris: Was there some backwash from people in AA that their work and their commitment was being denigrated or not recognized by the development of this alternative?

Pomeroy: No, people in AA, the thoughtful people who took a look at this at all, recognized that the National Council had come into being in order to be a public relations arm, if you like, in the alcoholism field, because one of the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous was that it was to follow a policy of attraction rather than promotion and in maintaining the anonymity of people in AA, you had to-- there is a whole spectrum of traditions that are involved.

For example, no one speaks for AA. It speaks for itself. It has no leader. AA has no leader, and so there was general recognition that the Council, as the national voluntary health agency in the alcoholism field, has a function to perform that in no way detracts from Alcoholics Anonymous, nor does it really impinge on Alcoholics Anonymous except to serve as a channel through which to reach AA.

Legislative Action and State Program Strategies

Morris: I sent you a list on legislation related to the state's interest in and concerns about alcoholism [see next page]. To what extent was the Council and your energy devoted to participating in or encouraging public programs and funding?

Pomeroy: The Council and my own personal energies became heavily involved through our state organization, the Alcoholism Council of California. In lobbying for the Gregorio bill we actually put together an organization called California Citizens Action on Alcoholism Public Policy.

Morris: Does that make an acronym?

Pomeroy: CCAAPP, yes. We did an organization job throughout the state, working with local alcoholism councils. In 1973 I was still with the Council, and the NCA Bay Area office was the CCAAPP office in northern California and the Alcoholism Council of California office served in southern California.

Senator Arlen Gregorio from San Mateo County proposed legislation to impose an increased tax on alcoholic beverages to support alcohol programs. We had participated in planning sessions in Sacramento, we had participated in organizing an information network to reach Council people around the state, to have them reach their own legislators, and worked very closely with Gregorio and his staff in promoting the bill. When the bill had passed and the governor had vetoed it, Gregorio said that he was going to try to override the veto. So we mobilized bus loads of people and proceeded to Sacramento and marched on the capitol. We had about two hundred or three hundred people out and Gregorio right up until an hour before the session felt that he had the votes to override the veto. The governor prevailed.

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Morris: Why was Gregorio interested?

Pomeroy: The Hughes Act, sponsored by Senator Harold Hughes, had been signed by President Nixon on December 3, 1969. I am sure that Gregorio's staff in looking at what that could mean in terms of funds coming down to California saw that as an issue that Arlen could involve himself in.

Morris: So they came to the state Council for help?

Pomeroy: Yes, and began working with--Thomas and Katherine Pike in southern California were the leading volunteers there. She had been very active in the mental health field and was well known to a man who was the southern California assemblyman who co-authored the--

Morris: Frank Lanterman?

CALIFORNIA

Summary of State Alcoholism Legislation, 1957-1974

1957 -- AB 3117 passed, establishing the Division of Alcoholic Rehabilitation in state Department of Public Health. Previous Alcoholic Rehabilitation Commission abolished. New legislation provided for research and demonstration projects and pilot clinics in San Francisco and seven other cities.

McAteer Act later expanded state alcoholism services, for a specific time period.

1969 -- S.F. Council on Alcoholism executive committee minutes: Alcoholic Rehabilitation Division shifts to the state Department of Rehabilitation, which had been carrying out the program under contract to Department of Public Health. New federal legislation provided additional funding for vocational rehabilitation. Concern that this would not provide for local programs not meeting federal requirements.

NCA wanted responsibility for all state programs concerned with alcoholism to be located in the Human Relations Agency.

1970 -- Office of Alcohol Program Management created, attached to governor's office. Coordinated 13 state agency programs; developing state plan to meet federal guidelines and also planning guides for creation of county direct service programs (19 presently exist, plus state-funded community mental health services in all counties); program for state employees being developed.

1971 -- Deukmejian bill passed; decriminalization of alcoholism; intent to encourage development of a statewide network of detoxification centers to send people to instead of jail for public drunkenness.

1973 -- Senator Arlen Gregorio introduced legislation to increase funding for local alcoholism treatment programs via tax on liquor; tax defeated, amended version provided additional funds for local programs for 18 months.

1974 -- Gregorio legislation re-introduced.

Pomeroy: Yes. Katherine had worked with Frank Lanterman and had interested him in supporting legislation and administrative interpretations that included some support for alcohol programs with the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Morris: Yes, this is something that has interested me, the way first mental health pulled out of public health, and then alcoholism treatment and funding pulled out of the mental health program and moved over into the rehabilitation program. Is some of that strategic or are there programs and therapeutic reasons for that kind of shift?

Pomeroy: It's a combination of both. The therapeutic reasons have to do with the majority of mental health professionals not having the faintest idea what to do with an alcoholic, the alcoholics seeking help resisting any identification with mental health programs--they're not crazy, they're just drunks. The strategic reason was that there was federal funding, starting in 1969, for alcohol programs available through state vocational rehabilitation services. There was a great distrust of what would happen to alcohol funding if it came down through mental health channels and a belief that it would somehow be absorbed in mental health programs without adequate programs being developed to deal with alcohol. So it was a combination of both factors.

Morris: The name Joel Fort comes to my mind. I remember talking to him years ago when he was in the State Department of Public Health and that he was very fiery in support of specific treatment programs for alcoholics.

Pomeroy: For alcohol and for other drugs as well. What a fiery soul, controversial as could be.

Morris: Was he more of a help or more of a hindrance in trying to develop some of these ideas?

Pomeroy: I think on balance you would have to say that Joel Fort was a hindrance finally. He alienated so many people. His intentions were of the best, I believe. I didn't get to know him well. I knew him.

Morris: He wasn't involved in the network of people that you were working with?

Pomeroy: No, he was not. Alcoholics distrusted him because he talked way over their heads. In his early days, he took no cognizance of AA at all. He didn't say anything bad about it, but he didn't say anything good about it either, with the result that people in AA, the recovered alcoholics, and those were the majority of the people that were concerned about alcoholism at that point, thought

here is somebody who doesn't know anything about AA. Well, he can't know anything about alcoholism. He was a psychiatrist, of course, which was a black mark against him as far as alcoholics were concerned.

Morris: It's an interesting parallel because the mental health movement went through the very similar concern of trying to withdraw from the public health generally and recognition of their--

Pomeroy: Oh, yes. San Francisco was the last major community in the state to keep its mental health program subordinated to its director of public health and they had great difficulty keeping mental health directors because of it!

Morris: Then eventually the alcoholism program moved over into the state Department of Rehabilitation.

Pomeroy: Vocational rehab, and that was a strategic financial matter. There were funds coming down from Washington for alcohol rehabilitation that were being made available only through the state department of vocational rehab, and so it was decided that was the place to put the program. It's incredible. It was during the California Reagan administration, by the way.

Morris: Do you remember anybody in the governor's office who was either particularly helpful or particularly unhelpful?

Pomeroy: There we had the Pikes. Tom Pike was a prominent Republican and fundraiser as a leading, very wealthy citizen and former subcabinet member in the Eisenhower administration. He had continuing access to the governor. I am not sure how much good it did us. It took Reagan, as I recall, about two years to move Loran Archer from acting director to director; kept him dangling that long. I believe Tom and Katherine Pike, who are the strongest volunteers in the alcoholism movement in California, were as frustrated as any of us.

Morris: Was this idea of an Office of Alcohol Program Management one that the Council supported?

Pomeroy: Yes, at that point we supported anything that would get alcohol programming standing on its own two feet. As I recall, some of us thought that the ideal situation would have been a division of alcohol program management within the State Department of Public Health with the program manager reporting to the state director of public health. But this was still within the Department of Rehabilitation because that was where the funding was still coming from.

Morris: Then in 1971, we have George Deukmejian in support of a bill to decriminalize alcoholism. Now, was this again something that he came up with through his contacts with the police organizations or was this something you--?

Pomeroy: This he had come up with through law enforcement's concerns about the amount of police time and money that was being spent. However, nationally we had NCA and other national organizations concerned about alcoholism, plus the newly created NIAAA [National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism] espousing decriminalization, and working with the national organization that proposed uniform state legislation. I can't remember the correct title of that, but it's the uniform laws. There are a number of areas of public concern in which it is recommended and proposed that there be uniform laws introduced in every state, and the decriminalization of alcoholism was one of the subjects proposed for uniform legislation. There was a model act which emerged from that group and NCA nationally and NCA in California supported it.

Now, I think Deukmejian's interest came from the law enforcement side as being a desirable thing. We had to interest ourselves in it because if there were going to be detox centers to which people were going to be sent rather than being put in jail, somebody had to support and encourage the development of the detox centers which did not exist.

Morris: The Police Officer's Association had the same concern. Did you join forces?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, we did. When we say joined forces, we certainly testified before the legislative committees side-by-side. This has been really the only legislation involving alcohol and alcoholism that I can remember that was not openly opposed by the liquor industry. They never appeared; had nothing to say about it.

Beer, Wine, and Liquor Industry Concerns

Morris: What kind of contact did you have with the liquor industry?

Pomeroy: Nationally, NCA had some relationships with the Brewer's Institute and with the distilled spirits organization, DISCUS. Locally in California, we found that the people who were testifying on behalf of the brewers were so incredibly naive that we had absolutely nothing to do with them. They would stand up in front of legislative committees in Sacramento and with a perfectly straight face say that nobody ever became an alcoholic drinking beer. So all we

could do in response to that was say that indeed there are alcoholics who got that way by drinking nothing except beer, but we had nothing, no commonality with them at all.

We did develop "entente cordiale" is perhaps the best way of describing our relations with the wine industry, with the Wine Institute representing the wine industry, and that's because of John De Luca, their paid president, who had been a White House Fellow, a legislative aide to State Senator McAteer, deputy mayor to Alioto, and now is in this extremely impressive job, because the wine industry in California is very significant. He is very clear that his organization will never support any additional taxation on wine, but they also have done some very good things. They have done a code of advertising ethics for the wine industry, and a recommended employee alcoholism program for their members.

Morris: Did the San Francisco Institute develop the code of ethics before the national wine industry?

Pomeroy: No, it's for their own membership, but that is ninety percent of the wine produced in California. We did one joint project with them in which they provided some money and we were the channel for communication on developing some prevention projects.

Morris: The liquor industry, I believe has begun to embark on some similar kinds of education.

Pomeroy: DISCUS, the distilled spirits organization.

Morris: Is that a result of the prodding of local, state, and national citizens groups?

Pomeroy: I don't think so. I think it is very much enlightened self interest. The brewers have worked out a program with the junior chamber of commerce, the Jaycees, in which they're--and, in general, the liquor industries are interested in, if they can, preventing the misuse of alcohol. The biggest threat to the industries is prohibition-- any possibility of a return of that awful legislation in their minds.

Morris: Is that considered a possibility by any of the people working in the field?

Pomeroy: Most of us would say that prohibition has to be viewed as having been a disastrous experiment. The National Council and all of its local affiliates undertake to make very clear that we are not a prohibitionist organization, that we are not opposed to drinking per se. We are only concerned about the abuse of alcohol. I for

one, and I am sure that it is a view that is shared by the great majority of people involved in not only NCA but in the alcohol field generally, would not support a return to prohibition.

Now, there is a movement afoot that says making alcohol more expensive, harder to get, will reduce drinking and therefore reduce alcoholism. I can't rationalize for you my opposition to this, but I sense that there is something very wrong in attempting to use confiscation, which is what the increase in prices is, as a means of treating an illness. Education, yes; a lot of information about what the early warning signs are of people's sensitivity to alcohol. But this repressive--I guess what I am responding to is a concern that we not become involved in repressive campaigns. I think we are going to do some battle on it because the executive committee of the National Council has issued a statement in which they are supporting labeling, they are supporting increased taxation--

Morris: Taxation as a method of limiting usage rather than taxation as financing treatment and education.

Pomeroy: Yes. I see battle lines being drawn on this kind of an issue.

Hazards of Public Funding

Morris: Going back to this legislation in '69 and '70, what kind of impact did the availability and increasing amounts of public funding have on the work of the Bay Area Council?

Pomeroy: It operated in two ways. First of all, within a year we had developed contracts with each of the five counties in which the Bay Area Council was operating, providing for some financial support for information and referral activities and for our employee assistance program.

Morris: You were in place, ready to go--

Pomeroy: We were in place ready to go. Now, of course, looking back on it, the fact that much of that funding has been withdrawn raises a question as to whether or not the voluntary agency should have been as heavily supported with tax funds as indeed it was. At one point a good sixty to sixty-five percent of our budget--we went to a Bay Area budget of about three hundred thousand dollars of which about sixty percent was funded from county contracts.

Morris: That's a real--

Pomeroy: There was some public funding that I resolutely said I would not recommend to our board that we consider getting involved in just because it would have carried us up--I had a set in my mind, a base of fifty percent. We had to be fifty percent supportive of our own efforts and the other fifty percent could be contract money with the idea that we would always be able to keep ourselves alive even if we didn't have public funds.

There were some public contracts that I just I would not be willing to recommend to the board that we even consider, because it would put us in such a high bracket of public support.

Morris: Did that mean then that there was some public funding that was authorized that was not spent because you weren't willing to--?

Pomeroy: No, I don't think that was the case. I think that we simply did not compete for some public funding, particularly for some NIAAA demonstration projects.

Morris: In what areas were those?

Pomeroy: There was one in education. I am trying to think. It was in conjunction with the Office of Traffic Safety for traffic safety projects. The Los Angeles County NCA (the Alcoholism Council of Greater Los Angeles) got itself heavily involved in some traffic safety projects and, of course, when the traffic safety projects were ended and the money was ended, they were sitting there having staff that they could no longer support and had to cut back.

Morris: Was your sense perhaps that some of these programs being suggested by the state and the federal government were ill-advised or expanding programs and services too fast without really building constituency and need?

Pomeroy: I am not sure that I was that thoughtful about it, Gaby. I think that I was being very protective about the status of a nonprofit voluntary agency and concerned about maintaining the integrity of the voluntary agency in a manner that would insure its existence as a voluntary agency.

Morris: As opposed to becoming a public agency, in fact?

Pomeroy: Yes, that was my primary concern.

Morris: How did your board respond to--?

Pomeroy: With complete support. They said, "Right on, we're with you."

Morris: Was there any thought of expanding the public programs, funded and run by the various levels of government? Was that something you could support?

Pomeroy: Yes, and we did. In San Francisco particularly, the county alcohol program office developed a fairly unique direction in that they decided that it was in the public interest to try to carry out as many of these new alcohol programs as possible by contract with nonprofit organizations. They did contract with a number. San Francisco has the highest ratio of such contracts for alcohol services of any of the major counties. The Alcohol Advisory Board was largely responsible for this, but certainly it wouldn't have happened if the staff hadn't been supportive. In other communities the counties themselves set up and operated programs, but in San Francisco they were very reluctant to take on the setting up of additional new programs because they were stuck with civil service and they really were depressed at how long it would take them to become operational and the difficulties they would have of getting qualified people.

Morris: In San Francisco, the idea is that the civil service does not produce terribly qualified people?

Pomeroy: Perhaps not so much that they were not qualified but that recruitment would be slow, and that they saw as desirable the employment of a number of recovered alcoholics and yet it would be very difficult to put that down as a specification, a qualification, in connection with job recruitment. So they could get around that by contracting with nonprofits. It's worked well.

Friend and Advisor to Related Groups

Morris: What was your position and the Council's in relation to the half-way houses and various kinds of residences and the detoxification centers.

Pomeroy: Social setting detox? Well, in general the Council position and my own was to support the development of any kind of resources or facilities that would provide both emergency and continuing help. The transition from treatment programs back into the real world is a very difficult one for many alcoholics. The development of halfway houses and residential programs as a six-month to a year transition stage is extremely valuable. The development of the social setting, nonmedical detox centers was important because it provided that three to five-day detox period at far less expense than is incurred when people have to go into hospitals. There is a lot of evidence to support the fact that they are very safe.

There needs to be hospital backup, but in most of the social setting detox centers, ninety-five to ninety-seven percent of the people admitted to them have never required any medical care or treatment.

Morris: Did the Council itself get involved in starting some of these programs?

Pomeroy: No, NCA as a matter of policy operates no treatment programs of any kind. One reason for that, is to maintain the Council and its information and referral service in such a position that it can always be objective in making referrals to appropriate treatment resources. In a few cases and in a few places around the country, Councils have indeed operated treatment programs and, of course, most of their referrals end up being to their own treatment, which isn't necessarily the best thing for the client.

Morris: But you did become involved with Stepping Stone and helping it get started?

Pomeroy: No, the Council certainly took no official action with respect to Stepping Stone. My own involvement was simply as a sort of friend and advisor to the women who were organizing it initially and then much later to become a member of the board of directors.

Morris: I think we have a good picture of how the Council operated. Next time we meet, maybe we could go on to how you have broadened out to so many other kinds of community efforts.

Pomeroy: All right, when do we meet?

[Interview #11: August 25, 1982]##

Staff Development, Use of Volunteers

Morris: Going back to the Council itself--last time we talked about Clinton Duffy as being the executive prior to yourself. In going through some more press clippings, I came across Chuck [Charles] Stern as--

Pomeroy: My immediate predecessor.

Morris: Your immediate predecessor and a couple of letters that sounded as if you were treading rather delicately in terms of boosting him out, in effect.

Pomeroy: Very delicately, yes. One walked on egg shells and on the ice and a few other things.

Morris: What were his qualities and--

Pomeroy: Here was a man whose last work I think had been with the American Cancer Society, although I am not sure of that. When he left NCA, I think he was going back to them. He had very little knowledge about alcoholism, did not particularly know the community--

Morris: He had not been in San Francisco very long?

Pomeroy: I think not or if he had been in San Francisco any length of time, he had managed to live in a cocoon somewhere because people he didn't know S.F. people. Personality-wise, he was not an outgoing person. His board sort of knew his name but didn't know much more about him. He was somebody that Judge Levin had selected for the job. So one couldn't say that he was incompetent, because he had some voluntary agency experience. He was unknowledgeable with respect to alcoholism and I think not very committed to the importance of the mobilization of volunteers with respect to any program, and those were sort of the prime points that I felt needed to be built into the Council.

Really what it finally came down to were sort of hard facts. I had secured the commitment of foundations and individuals to support a development program for the Council, all of which were contingent on my doing it.

Morris: I see, that was what these donors wanted.

Pomeroy: That was the basis on which I had gone to them--this is my dream, this is what I hope to do, and if the Council board is willing to have me do it, will you support it? In effect what it was was going to the Council board and saying, "You lucky people, I have a dowry!" [laughter]

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Pomeroy: The National Council nationally was placing a great deal of emphasis on the development of what they called labor-management alcoholism programs. There had not been any staff in San Francisco, or indeed in the Bay Area, committed to just that program. So the major additional staff that I was proposing we should have was the addition of a labor-management consultant and one additional counselor on the staff of the Council, in order to provide better information and referral service.

Morris: Were volunteers being used at that point as counselors?

Pomeroy: No, they were not being used at that point as counselors. In fact, the volunteers were not being used. There may have been one or two who came in to do some clerical work from time to time, but

nothing like the volunteer program that I visualized as being essential if we were going to provide extended telephone service and all that sort of thing.

Morris: At what point did you begin to think of and then use recovered alcoholics as volunteers in the program?

Pomeroy: Very early on because other councils that I was able to learn about had very successfully used family members, Al-Anon members, and recovered alcoholics themselves once they had had a long enough period of recovery so that they were stabilized and could handle the pressures and problems of other people's troubles.

Morris: That's kind of a carryover of the AA idea of somebody who has been there helping.

Pomeroy: The other realistic thing was, Gaby, that we tried recruiting volunteers through the traditional recruitment sources, through the Volunteer Bureau and so on. The state of public acceptance of alcoholism as a focus for volunteer activity was such that we didn't have very much luck. So we had to turn to the people who were most directly affected and who were most concerned about alcoholism in order to get the volunteers in the numbers that we needed them.

National Council Report on San Francisco Hospitals

Morris: The National Council, I gather, had sent somebody out to San Francisco to do a report on hospital care for alcoholism. There are long letters to and from Marty Mann. This is February, 1968, and Dr. John Stirruck had come out and talked to everybody he could find in the Bay Area.*

Pomeroy: That's the second month that I was on the Council.

Morris: Right, and his field trip had been in October, '67.

Pomeroy: So I had never seen him.

Morris: I gather that it was sent to you unofficially, that you were aware of it. It was supposed to be confidential, but Marty Mann sent you the report because she thought that you needed to know and--

Pomeroy: But I don't remember at this moment one single thing about it.

*See appendix.

Morris: I should have sent you some notes about it. The comment in the report is that there is no uniformity of attitude or management in the area. There is no individual or group that seems consensually identified with alcoholism. That was a word I had never encountered before.

Pomeroy: We'll never use it again!

Morris: [There was] not a terribly positive response from hospitals on treating alcoholics.

Pomeroy: No, Mt. Zion was the only hospital that had made any effort to treat alcoholism openly without putting people in locked wards, and that was a result of Dr. Jack Gordon's activity.

Morris: Was hospital care something that was of major interest to the Council and to you?

Pomeroy: Let me think about that just a moment because at that point in time, there was clearly a need for some kind of adequate detoxification treatment, and people were not really getting it anywhere in the public hospitals and certainly not in the private hospitals except at Mt. Zion. The only place that alcoholics were being accepted and placed in the normal rooms or wards was at Mt. Zion where Jack Gordon had done special training of nurses and of doctors and residents to prove to people that alcoholics could be treated in a perfectly normal hospital setting.

It was a matter of concern in terms of there being no insurance coverage for the treatment of a person in a hospital. What you had then was the admission of people to hospitals under any diagnosis except that of alcoholism. Philosophically, there was a great deal of feeling in the alcoholism community about this because denial was perpetuated. Every time a doctor put an alcoholic in a hospital for pancreatitis or what have you and didn't identify it as having any relationship to alcohol, the patient could happily say, "My problem isn't drinking. I'm not here because of drinking. I am here because I really have something wrong with me." He is there because he really had something wrong with him, but the cause of it was alcohol.

That was the philosophical concern, but the very practical concern was that there were a couple of very expensive drying out places in San Francisco. I am trying to remember the name of the incredible woman who ran one of them who put people in locked rooms and fed them--oh, what is that horrible stuff? --peraldehyde, which is the most foul-smelling medication that has ever been invented.

Morris: To dry them out or to make them reject alcohol?

- Pomeroy: No, this is to dry them out. Peraldehyde is a sedative. If a person might be threatened with delirium tremens or was being noisy and obstreperous, you would try to force some peraldehyde down. It had the same effect of a good stiff drink or a sedative of some kind, but without some of the life-threatening aspects of heavy sedation and was used by people who were not medically qualified.
- Morris: It was a nonprescription substance?
- Pomeroy: No, I think you have to get peraldehyde on a prescription. In fact, I know you did, but somehow these places would have an attending physician, but would not necessarily call him for every patient and he would leave a substantial supply of the medication available--oh, it was awful stuff!
- Morris: The program at Mt. Zion makes me curious as to what connection it might have had with the psychiatric program, because didn't Mt. Zion also have one of the pioneer psychiatric programs?
- Pomeroy: Yes, but it had no connection. The alcohol program had no connection with the psychiatric program. Jack Gordon is an internist and I, as a matter of fact, have never asked Jack--Jack was on the original board of NCA-SF, for goodness sake, and I have never asked him specifically what prompted him to initiate that program. But it went back a number of years earlier than that. I can remember that at the time I went to the Council here in San Francisco, there was already a national NCA publication that described the demonstration program at Mt. Zion, and NCA was spreading this good news all around the country.
- Morris: In general, what was the connection of the work the Council was doing in relation to psychiatric programs in the state hospitals? I understand that those statistics show that a number of people in psychiatric care are there because of alcohol-related problems.
- Pomeroy: Back in the fifties, it was not uncommon for judges on the request of family members to commit an alcoholic that a family would allege was completely unmanageable to ninety days in a psychiatric hospital. This was a mandatory commitment. By the sixties, the judges were recognizing that mandatory commitments of alcoholics were getting them nowhere. The voluntary commitments, where people themselves came and asked to be committed to state psychiatric hospitals, were bearing some fruit because the person wanted help. The mandatory commitment process was a very negative action--their psychiatric treatment method of dealing with the alcoholic was notably unsuccessful and remains so to this day.

National Organizational Changes; 1968 Regional Conference

Morris: That same year when you came to the Council, apparently there were some major changes in the Council nationally. There was a new executive director and there was a regional conference that was here in San Francisco.

Pomeroy: Yes, Marty Mann had for some time been saying to her board that she should step over--not step out, but step over--and that an active, effective administrator of NCA should be recruited.

Morris: Someone more of a professional rather than someone--

Pomeroy: Someone more of a professional in the voluntary agency health field and in my view, NCA was extraordinarily fortunate in getting--he's the former associate executive of the American Heart Association--William Moore.

Pomeroy: We became very good friends because he came aboard just about the time I did and we almost instantly recognized and accepted each other on a professional basis. Marty remained a very dear personal friend and a revered figure in the crusade for alcoholism.

Bill had his difficulties from the very beginning because the staff that Marty had recruited were primarily recovered alcoholics and not necessarily people with professional skills or training that they had brought to the job. What they brought was the fact that they were in some ways very talented people, but not necessarily in the particular jobs they were in. The thing they brought to it was they recovered from alcoholism.

Morris: And their enthusiasm for the call. That sounds like the sort of situation one would run into a number of areas where people were using paraprofessionals. Is that a logical analogy?

Pomeroy: Yes, although the organization of NCA at the top during Marty's developmental years was not really on an organized basis. It sort of kept growing. There was an organization and it was functioning and carrying out a variety of programs, but it was not developing at all at the pace that was necessary or important for the magnitude of the problem. It really wasn't until the great push for the federal legislation with Harold Hughes that NCA began to take on or define for itself a more hard hitting, broader role.

- Morris: The goal in terms of achievement led to strengthening the organization rather than a strong organization becoming more successful.
- Pomeroy: That was pretty clearly an outcome. Of course, it ultimately also came very close to leading to its downfall, because NCA nationally became so heavily involved in federally supported projects and it never developed and still hasn't to this day an adequate fund raising program to support itself as a national voluntary agency. So it went through that ten-year period of the seventies and, as I say, almost to destruction. I think it does not now have a single federal project.
- Morris: Do you recall that 1968 conference, the regional conference--?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, very, very clearly because that was the first NCA conference in which I participated as an NCA staff person.
- Morris: It would also be Bill's maiden effort.
- Pomeroy: His first conference and [it] brought together the professional staff from up and down the coast, Los Angeles and--I am trying to remember where else. I don't remember where else, but there were---
- Morris: Would it be the western region--Nevada, Montana, Utah, Arizona?
- Pomeroy: Yes, it was the western regional group, although I am not sure we had any Councils in Nevada at that point. We had them in California. We did not have them in Oregon. We did have them in the state of Washington.
- Morris: How many people roughly would turn out for that?
- Pomeroy: I would guess that there were probably--including the people that came out from New York--probably between twenty and twenty-five people.
- Morris: All of them about at the same stage that the San Francisco Council was in?
- Pomeroy: No, at that point the Los Angeles, and Pasadena, and the Santa Barbara Councils gave considerably more evidence of strength. They were all founded in about the same time. I think Pasadena was the very first one in the state, but they'd had more consistent growth. The San Francisco Council simply started and just never moved forward. It had its one or two staff members and it kept an office going, but it had not become involved in programs.

Pasadena had become involved in the development of The Casa which was, at that time a unique experiment in the whole country. It was a home for women with alcohol problems who also had children [and they] could come and bring their children and could live there. It only took care of maybe six or eight women and their children, but it was a demonstration of something that was needed and is still needed to this day.

Los Angeles had begun to develop some outlying Council offices. It had a central office and it began to help in the development of an office in Long Beach and another one in the Valley and so on, at least information and referral centers. Los Angeles also had moved on the focus on labor-management programs, so they were somewhat ahead.

Morris: Were there people amongst those twenty to twenty-five that you found particularly helpful that were trying things you wanted to try or were you primarily a resource for them?

Pomeroy: I think I was a resource for them in terms of how you mobilize in the community, because I had had the Community Fund and the United Way experience and none of them had had that, and so to that extent I was a resource. On the other hand, in terms of the things that were already going on, like a labor-management program, I spent some time with the Los Angeles people to find out what they were doing and how they did it. The Pasadena Council had a terrific volunteer program, and so I spent some time with them learning about their volunteer program.

Marty came up for that meeting, too, if I remember, and certainly the initial sessions--and we met, as I recall for at least three days--and the opening of it was built around Bill and Marty; Marty introducing Bill and Marty reiterating as she did so effectively and inspiringly the basic goals and purposes, and then Bill getting into a discussion about how we could build the relationship between the local Councils and the national and drawing on his experience in the Heart Association, doing it very skillfully without making people feel that somehow the Heart Association was the great example of how everything should be done, but simply showing people--

Then the rest of it was devoted to exploring the questions that various people had suggested that they would like to have discussed and ranged from the basic policy of NCA--we don't want treatment programs, we're not opposed to alcohol--we're just concerned about the abuse of alcohol, to discussion about the kind of information programs that would help broaden understanding in the community and that sort of thing, and responding to the extent that it was possible to what [were] the expressed felt needs of the people who were trying to run local Councils.

California Representation on National Issues

- Morris: Was the feeling of the people that national was over them imposing things on them and making demands on them or primarily that the national was a help?
- Pomeroy: At that point in time, there was a real feeling that national was a help. There was a person at national who had developed the labor-management program. There was somebody on the national staff who was experienced and had produced a very good document outlining the development of an information and referral center. So there was a strong feeling that national at that time was a valuable resource. This changed as time went on--national in due time became somewhat of a burden.
- Morris: By when did it become a burden?
- Pomeroy: I would say by 1972.
- Morris: That's interesting because by 1972 there were a flock of California members on the national board: Mrs. Joseph Costello, Leonard Firestone, James Free from Santa Barbara, Mrs. Pike, and Mr. Thomas Pike.
- Pomeroy: Yes, both of them.
- Morris: Yes, she is listed as San Marino and he is listed as L.A. Does that make a difference?
- Pomeroy: That made a difference because she was representing the Pasadena Council and he was representing the Los Angeles Council.
- Morris: Okay, and a Dr. Lawrence Wharton from Long Beach.
- Pomeroy: I never met or laid eyes on him.
- Morris: Was that excessive representation from California?
- Pomeroy: No, because California at that time had more local Councils than any other area. Texas was the other place where Councils sprang up like weeds.
- Morris: The Bay Area is on record as having a high incidence of alcohol abuse. Is Texas also?

Pomeroy: I don't think Texas has the public record of the high incidence of alcohol abuse, but what they had were some early very active recovered alcoholics who were involved in setting up a state alcoholism program funded by the State of Texas. So these Councils that sprang up all over the state were state-funded bodies. They became members of NCA or affiliates of NCA, but they were indeed financed by the state. It was not too dissimilar an operation to the state of Washington; there were some councils there then publicly funded.

Councils in California were not funded by public funds until we got to the point where we contracted with the state to perform certain services, but were not endowed with any state money to get them started.

State and National Governmental Programs

Morris: While Reagan was governor, he called a governor's conference on alcoholism. Did that amount to anything of use?

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Pomeroy: No, he did that at the instigation of Tom Pike who talked Reagan into calling a governor's conference on alcoholism and it could-- this sounds very arrogant--but it couldn't have amounted to very much because I don't remember one single thing about it.

Morris: They didn't ask you about setting it up?

Pomeroy: I'm sure not. I don't think I had a thing to do with it.

We had, because the McAteer Act had provided it, a state alcohol advisory board, but it was not a strong body. The state alcoholism program office related, of course, to the state advisory board, but there were not the kind of people sitting on the advisory board who commanded attention and, therefore, lent some strength to the movement. They were just simply a part of the whole state operation and nobody paid it too much attention.

Morris: Were there any appointees from any of the state's NCA affiliates?

Pomeroy: There was probably a scattering of people from around the state who, at one time or another, served on that board. Bob O'Briant (Dr. Robert O'Briant) at one time served on it. Jack Gordon was asked to two or three times and I think never accepted.

Morris: Were there any people that you or your Council lobbied for?

Pomeroy: I think we lobbied with great regularity for somebody from our area, and I can't remember whether we had any specific candidates or whether we looked around at the people who were being considered and figured out who would be most supportive of the voluntary movement. We hoped the state would--and in due time, I think, it did support the voluntary system to a fairly good extent, but probably not because of what the advisory board did but because of what the state alcohol program staff did when they became convinced that the support of the voluntary movement would in the long run be advantageous for them because they would provide help in lobbying. I think that [was] the realistic outcome of it.

Morris: Who was it that gave you that understanding?

Pomeroy: Loran Archer.

Morris: He was a good person in that spot?

Pomeroy: Yes, Loran is a good person. He is still the deputy director of the National Institute of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse in Washington. Loran was a good state director and is also very effective as the second person. He is a good workman and really committed to the alcoholism field; not a recovered alcoholic, but came out of the rehab field. He has a marvelously steady temperament. He remained, under Reagan, the acting director for two years. Then he did the same thing under Brown [Edmund G., Jr.].

Morris: Where was he during the rest of the Reagan administration?

Pomeroy: He served as the deputy.

Morris: I see, acting director and then deputy again.

Pomeroy: And then deputy again and then acting director. Then when Brown appointed Rita Sainz, an Hispanic woman who came out of the poverty programs, Loran went to Washington as a deputy there, where he has remained and served as deputy to about three administrators.

Morris: Is that a frequent kind of arrangement, that there are some people who are better as deputies carrying out things and other people are better at policy and innovation?

Pomeroy: There is no question that there are. This is the British principle that you have the policy appointments from the political arena and you have the people who carry the programs from the civil service list. Now, in the case of NIAAA, because it's an institute that is part of the Department of Health, Education, and

Welfare, or Health and Welfare, it's an exempt position. It's not a civil service position, but Loran has survived through several presidents--Ford, Carter, and Reagan.

Morris: It sounds like Tom Pike was somebody that you felt comfortable with who did influence things statewide.

Pomeroy: And nationally.

Morris: What was his relation to Ronald Reagan, and why didn't he have better luck in advising Reagan on who to appoint to the state alcoholism board?

Pomeroy: His role and relationship with Reagan is that Tom has been a Republican fundraiser and therefore a force, since I guess the early Nixon days. I believe he served as deputy secretary of the army under Eisenhower. His own Pike Corporation was ultimately bought by Fluor, which is a multi-national, and he became a vice chairman of the board of Fluor. So he has been a distinguished industrialist, businessman in California and I guess his father before him. He is a recovered alcoholic and very open about it. It has been more than thirty years now.

He and Katherine were responsible for supporting Marty's efforts to organize in California. She always stayed with them when she came to southern California. They helped in the organization in both the Los Angeles and Pasadena Councils by providing money as well as leadership. They served on the national board together and separately at different times, always gave generously to the National Council. At both state and national levels Tom and Katherine, together and separately, have contributed unique and tireless leadership to the cause of dealing with alcoholism. I think they are two of the most steadfast people I know.

I think Reagan probably appointed some people on the basis of Tom's recommendation, but I think that the functioning of the advisory board was such that the members didn't coalesce and become a force.

Strong San Francisco Leadership

Morris: In contrast, were you working to make your board here in San Francisco a force in the community?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, very much so. When there were people like Caroline Charles and Patty Costello and Jack Mailliard and representatives of firms like Standard Oil and the Bank of America and the telephone company--, there was forceful leadership.

My formula, never expressed in writing anywhere, was not more than half the board should be recovered alcoholics and the other half should be very strong community leadership. Actually I think never more than a third of that board during the time I was involved with it were recovered alcoholics.

Morris: How did the two groups feel about each other?

Pomeroy: They seemed to blend together very well. Again, people like Caroline and Patty were the catalysts who learned from the recovered alcoholics, those who chose to express themselves in matters that related to alcoholism per se. The other members of the board learned from them and respected them for their courage and their strength and their knowledge and in turn the recovered alcoholic members of the board felt that they were building something in the community by having a relationship with some of the community leadership.

Morris: Caroline we have talked to and has expressed herself on volunteer activities. Patty Costello is not that visible. Can you tell me a little bit about her?

Pomeroy: She has been pretty visible.

Morris: I mean in terms of this kind of expression of how volunteer organizations worked.

Pomeroy: No, you are quite right. She has not had the visibility. She was a president of the Junior League, on the board of and served as president of Sunny Hills, the children's institution. Her primary interest has been mental health. She has been president of the local and state mental health associations and served on the national board. Her interest in alcoholism stems from having had some experience with it in her family, which is a very common--

Morris: Motivator?

Pomeroy: Motivator. Patty was one of the three founders of the Youth Campus here, which has just died an unfortunate death for lack of public support. She has never functioned in as broad a role in the community as Caroline did.

Morris: She is younger, am I right? She is another generation of volunteer leadership?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, she is currently around fifty with Leslie Luttgens. There is a group probably of half a dozen of those ladies who followed each other as presidents of the League, Leslie and Patty Costello, and later then, of course, the women who are now active with Children's Hospital.

Morris: On your board, did she work on membership or fundraising or program development?

Pomeroy: She worked on fundraising, she worked on membership, and still serves on the state board of the Alcoholism Council of California. She is no longer on the local board. She thought of herself, I think, as providing a background of experience from the Mental Health Association on which the Council could draw. She also, because of her experience in mental health legislation is an excellent public affairs committee person.

Morris: Was the board much involved in alcoholism programs?

Pomeroy: The Council per se, and particularly the board of the Council did not have active involvement with the sort of ancillary programs in the community. When a community program, for example, Henry Ohloff House or the women's recovery home, Stepping Stone, might have wanted to make a proposal to a foundation or corporation it could be presented to the board of the Council and once it was explained, you could probably get an endorsement for it. What we did have was a pretty close working relationship between the staff of the Council and the various services and programs that were growing up.

I worked closely with the Henry Ohloff House people, with the Stepping Stone people, and with the development of the alcoholism program at Garden Hospital. I sat on a committee to help develop the program and to help in the selection of the first executive of the program. So we had that kind of involvement. It was more through my personal involvement as the director of the Council, but with the knowledge and approval of the board and with the board always being aware of what was going on.

Morris: By and large, was it a matter of you bringing to the board meeting things that were going on in the community and getting their okay, or the board had its ideas that they were prodding you about?

Pomeroy: I regret to say that it was mostly my involvement in bringing [it] to the board. I say "I regret to say" because I don't really approve of boards who are not in some measure out in the forefront.

Stresses of Areawide Organization

Morris: Let me ask you one last question about the National Council and then I think we are at the point where we want to talk about your next major direction. You also presided over the development of a Bay Area Council, the transformation of local Councils of varying strengths. Was that as complex a process and as troublesome for the participants as the merger of the United Way county organizations?

Pomeroy: It had many of the same elements in it, but on a much smaller scale, very minute. ##

Pomeroy: My recollection is that I started that probably a year after, so it started in '69 and I think that our Bay Area agreements were dated about '71 or '72.

Pomeroy: The premise on which we moved was that if we were ever to seek United Way support that we would have to do it on a Bay Area basis. United Way had had it by this time in terms of taking in different local chapters of organizations that operated in more than one county United Way had either made the decision or was about to make the decision that they would never accept a part of an agency that was operating in more than one of the Bay Area counties. So if alcoholism was ever going to be included in United Way, we would have to do it as a five-county organization. That was a strong motivating force at that time. Subsequently we applied for United Way membership and were not accepted because it was during the time when United Way was having pretty hard going.

Morris: In terms of new groups?

Pomeroy: Of accepting new members. Then, when it began to look as if United way might be more receptive, the goals and ambitions of NCA-Bay Area were such that it looked pretty clear that the amount of money that the United Way might be willing to give to a new agency wouldn't begin to meet the basic budget in the five counties. So the effort was given up. I am of the opinion that it may be the time that United Way, having raised more money in the last couple of years, it may be the time for them to go again.

In the meantime, of course, the Bay Area Council no longer covers all five counties. It has the office in San Francisco and it doesn't have offices anywhere else. There are separate Councils in Marin County and in Contra Costa County. I haven't talked to Jackie [Tolliver] about what has happened in Alameda County

recently, but the county withdrew its support last year. I don't know whether an office staffed by volunteers still exists. It may.

Pomeroy: But Contra Costa and Marin are separate and there isn't an office in San Mateo any more.

Morris: How did that happen?

Pomeroy: That happened because my successor managed with surprising skill to alienate staff and volunteers in Contra Costa, Marin, and San Mateo Counties to the point where first Contra Costa County, then Marin County withdrew from the Bay Area Council. We built up an organization and then just watched it fade away.

Morris: Because the tasks had primarily been done?

Pomeroy: No, no, not at all; because of personality conflicts, lack of trust. The staff and the board in both Marin County and Contra Costa County came to distrust the executive, and by the time she left, the two counties had withdrawn completely. Jackie has been able to develop effective relationships in each county, but there so far has been no indication of any willingness or desire on anybody's part to reconstruct what was the Bay Area Council.

Morris: Has this had an impact on the availability and the quality of the kinds of services and programs that are available?

Pomeroy: I think that what has happened is that the availability and quality of services--the slack--has probably been taken up by the public agencies in both counties (in county alcoholism agencies) and by the development and flourishing of some new voluntary agencies. There is an education committee in Marin County that seems to have been functioning now for a number of years.

These things seem to be going on, so I think it would not be correct to say that the separation has resulted in any great loss of service or activities. I think what is lost is the potential for speaking with one voice in the Bay Area on any issue, and I think this can become important where legislation is concerned. On the other hand, the Bay Area Council still carries the name and that leads me to think maybe there is still an office in Oakland; and then there is a San Francisco office of the Bay Area Council as well, although they are both physically located in the same place with the same staff.

The real, effective lobbying when it comes to having a voice in what is happening in Sacramento can be developed on a very informal basis. You don't have to have a formal structure and as

long as there are people concerned about alcohol legislation who know people in the other counties, as some of us still do, we can mobilize some kind of support for legislation.

Morris: But that is on an ad hoc basis.

Pomeroy: Very much on an ad hoc basis.

XVII ISSUES OF THE 1980's; NEW PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS*

The Women's Movement

Pomeroy: I thought you might like to see this newsletter of the Women's Foundation, one of my current extracurricular activities.

Morris: I should think so. How long has it been operating?

Pomeroy: It was incorporated about two years ago and it took about a year to get organized. You won't recognize many of the board members, but you will recognize--

Morris: The advisory council--

Pomeroy: The advisory council, yes. A number of us felt that we were not willing to commit the time and some us couldn't afford the luxury that you paid of being a board member, because I would not be a board member of something like that unless I could contribute very substantially. But we did feel that we could lend our good names and our support.

Morris: Do you suppose that women's issues are going to continue to be sufficiently separate from the mainstream that there will continue to be a need for a woman's foundation?

Pomeroy: My guess is that if you look at some of the facts and disparities related to the support by foundations, community funds, United Ways, and corporate giving for girls clubs versus boys clubs, for all kinds of women's programs, I have to think that there is real justification for continued activity of the Women's Foundation.

*This chapter begins with the initial portion of Tape 22, side A. Tape 23, side A, resumes on page 331.

But I think we can leave a legacy of defined concern about women's issues in more moderate terms than the Gloria Steinems felt they had to do it. I was very, very critical of the stridency of the women's movement initially. I thought this was undignified and placed--as a matter of fact, put all women on the defensive. As I look back on it, my suspicion is that there had to be somebody capable of being that obnoxious--

Morris: In order to be heard?

Pomeroy: In order to be heard and in order to jolt many of us who simply didn't see it initially. I had gone along--I suppose until I was in my early sixties because this is ten years ago--and I had never encountered a problem that I could say with reasonable honesty reflected any discrimination because I was a woman. I had gone anywhere, done anything I wanted to job-wise as well as in other ways. So I was certainly living in an unreal world because all we have to do is look at the events of the last ten years, even some of the lawsuits that have been filed in major corporations, because women indeed were not given anything resembling an equal opportunity.

Morris: Is that what made you become an advocate of the women's movement?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, a general awareness and a feeling that the world has been very kind to me and, as a woman, the fact that I had never experienced discrimination, at least that I was conscious of--who knows?--none that I could actually identify. I began to turn myself around and I am not an ardent feminist, believe me, at this point.

I could never manage the effort that Arlene Daniels puts into her defense of women's positions.* Perhaps because she is probably twenty years younger, it has something to do with that. But I think by nature we are different souls, and I am basically middle class and comfortable with that. I think origins and the way one has lived have a lot to do with one's attitudes. But I will work for and lend myself to causes that I think are important. I guess I am not a militant at heart. That, I think, is what separates my efforts. When they move into the realm of militancy, I think I back away, and I think that's me. [tape interruption]

Morris: Does the setting up of the Women's Foundation relate at all to one of the generally accepted bits of information that women have traditionally controlled a lot of money, but have not actually exercised how it is used?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, very, very clearly because one of their purposes is to offer--and in this area they are departing from the normal foundation role--but they have already offered one or two seminars and

*Ms. Daniels is head of the Program on Women at Northwestern University.

will continue as a major part of an education program that they want to carry on, seminars on financial management, and that sort of thing.

They hope very much that by offering women information that is going to be provided primarily by women, they are going to build in the consciousness of women a degree of confidence and assurance that they can learn to manage their own affairs and that they do not have to rely on the traditional male advice.

Morris: Are there other women's foundations around the country?

Pomeroy: This is the first. I think that undoubtedly, judging by the number of inquiries that have been received here, there will be more springing up.

Commitment to Peace

Morris: While we are on it, one time in between taping, you made a similar comment about not having been involved in the anti-war movement in its active period in the sixties and that this was something also that you have had second thoughts about. Would you care to comment on that?

Pomeroy: Yes, indeed, because again--and this I find hard to really rationalize for myself because having observed first hand in Europe for a substantial period of time, not just a fleeting look at the ravages of World War II--how I could not have been more intensely affected by the anti-war movement in the sixties, particularly with respect to Vietnam and the reactions of young people. I am curious about that in myself and I have no explanation for it. I can't remember where the first impact of the anti-nuclear expressions began to hit me, but the more I have thought about that, the more committed I have become to the belief that citizen expression can have an effect and can have an impact and that if we believe in something, that within whatever our natures we'll support, we need to give expression to it.

I doubt that I could march in anti-war parades. Just practically speaking, my feet and hip disabilities would preclude my being a very good marcher. On the other hand, I certainly can sign petitions and I can and have secured signatures on petitions. And I obviously don't have a great deal of money, but the money that I can afford to give away to good causes I can and have shared with that kind of a cause, and I can talk about it and I can be articulate. Those are the things that I now feel that I will do. I have become involved very modestly in the nuclear

freeze, and I have become involved very modestly in the anti-gun movement to the extent of giving it some money and signing petitions and that sort of thing.

A Note on Personal Style

Morris: I have read through the press clippings that you sent me, and I think that at least half of the newspaper articles and the nice people who came to interview you all commented on your love of the color red. That is something that we haven't talked about.

Pomeroy: Interesting.

Morris: Yes, you are wearing a very pretty rose-colored skirt and a print blouse today. Tell me about red in your life.

Pomeroy: Oh, red has always been--and this goes back, I think, certainly to my high school and college days--that my best dress was always red. Mother made a lot of my clothes when I was growing up and did it really beautifully. I never felt that I was wearing "Loving hands at home" because they were beautifully done. But nearly all my most important things were red.

Morris: Your choice or your mother's choice?

Pomeroy: Oh, mine. Mother was very responsive to it. To this day, I always have to have something red in my wardrobe. If my spirits need picking up, I just go like a homing pigeon to something red in the closet, and you can see I have that around me--that red screen I have had around me for twenty-five years.

Then you see in my balloons--these were commissioned paintings that I had a friend of mine in New York do of the balloons with the animals in them to my prescription.

Morris: You also had a red telephone on your desk at the council.

Pomeroy: I had a red telephone on my desk. I have never had one here because the telephones were in when I arrived here. I had a red telephone at home until I moved to where I am now and a red telephone would have been such a glaring [thing] against everything white all over my bedroom, so we have black and white telephones around now--aging I guess!

Morris: The early photographs in the collection you sent me also feature hats quite regularly up until about the 1960's I would say.

Pomeroy: Yes, and there is a story about hats. I adored hats and one of my pecadilloes when I was flying around the country working, and this was a particular sort of a peculiar manifestation during the last of my drinking, wherever I went, if I had an hour to kill, I would wend my way into the best shop I could find and buy a hat. At the time that I had a fire in my house in Sausalito, the destruction was all limited to a rather small area. I had a little office, but I also had a specially-built cabinet that I had made to put hat boxes in. The destruction of the hats was major in the fire and the insurance adjuster nearly lost his mind. He did not believe anyone could have fifty hats. But I did--every size and shape under the sun.

I stopped wearing hats when I went to a fairly early board meeting of the United Community Fund when I became the director and found that I was the only woman at the table wearing a hat. All my board members were hatless, and I was wearing a hat. I looked around and I had the sense to be a little embarrassed, as if I was putting them down and I didn't mean to at all, it was just that I loved hats!

Morris: You hadn't been aware of the change when women stopped wearing hats?

Pomeroy: It had sort of grown on me, but I still saw enough women in public places, and in those days we held our board meetings in restaurants, either the Palace Hotel or Jack's, and I thought that I was really being very proper--hat and gloves. But when I was the only woman at the table out of probably twenty people wearing a hat, I stopped wearing hats immediately and then started wearing my bows and have never been without a bow since. I do take them off when I shower and I sleep! I now have a collection of certainly more than fifty bows, but they don't take as much space. And I have attached myself to the bows.

Morris: It's very becoming.

Pomeroy: It's become a trademark.

New Directions for Nonprofits

Morris: The New Directions report that the United Way put out expresses the same kind of organizational concerns we've been discussing. That came along in '71, but I assume that the preliminary study and thought had taken place at least a year before then.

It's a statement of some basic positions on the nonprofit sector--and it's primary thesis is that the United Way community has reached the point where United Way should be an initiator and there should be more involvement of board members and that there should be improvements in agency management, there should be changes of governance all around.

- Pomeroy: Yes, and you are right. The most significant thing about that is the time in which it came out in '71.
- Morris: It sounds as if you were operating on those principles yourself. Was that generally what the nonprofit community was concerned with in '71?
- Pomeroy: Certainly, Ray Baarts was; who by that time, I guess, had retired. He had espoused that from the time he arrived here. This is a man who I think was never fully recognized for the vision that he had.
- Morris: Those are principles that are similar to the kinds of points that are made in 1981-1982 articles about the nonprofits.
- Pomeroy: By the independent sector, yes. I think we are moving again toward a very critical time in the nonprofit--the do-good--world because of the pressures and the demands that are going to emerge as the result of a serious depression plus a totally new, essentially new, attitude on the part of government of reducing, reducing, reducing. I think that the pressures that are going to mount on the private sector are enormous, and maybe what was happening through the seventies in terms of trying to involve volunteer leadership more extensively and to improve the governance and management of nonprofit institutions was sort of a way of preparing some of the institutions to take an enormous amount of pressure because I think they are going to take it.
- Morris: That's a fascinating way of looking at it, that somehow they could perceive that this was coming and you needed to be prepared for it.
- Pomeroy: Poverty and unemployment, do some very demanding things to human beings. My recollections of the Depression starting in '29 and the thirties are very vivid. We are looking now at something like the same phenomena but against a background of inflation and therefore people's concepts of money and material things being very different than they were fifty years ago.
- Morris: And their expectations perhaps.
- Pomeroy: And their expectations are so different. People in '29 and '30 were looking for the money that would make it possible to buy a twelve-cent loaf of bread. Today when the person is unemployed

and has to look at buying a sixty-cent loaf of bread, and you've got three kids who eat a loaf of bread at a meal, somehow there is an incredible distortion of the values. I think this does something to people's psychology about how they react to [it].

Morris: One of the things I wondered about in relation to the eighties is if there was the same sense of some people not being able to find twelve cents for a loaf of bread and other people never having had it so good. Where we are now, there is also a tremendous amount of affluence--

Pomeroy: Visible affluence. There was not anything like the comparable visible affluence in the thirties; there was very little overt evidence of well-being. Now, obviously, the Rockefellers were not in the bread line and neither were lots of other people, but there was a quietness about everybody else. One of the chilling phenomena of the '29-'30 period was the public suicide rate. People publicly gave up and that tended to keep everybody subdued. I guess we hear of it, that the suicide rate in Detroit has jumped, presumably because of unemployment there, but we are not seeing--

Morris: Jumping off of the upper floors of the stock exchange.

Pomeroy: No.

Consulting Partnership with Sanford Treguboff and John May

Morris: In the article about your taking over as director of the Council, there were a number of comments about your enthusiasm for starting a new tack at age fifty-five. Were you consciously thinking about doing something new and then again were you thinking about that ten years later [when you went into consulting], that it was a positive decision that you wanted to try something new in 1975?

Pomeroy: Oh, yes, at sixty-five. Very definitely. There were two factors involved. One was that the five-county organization was going full tilt. We had contracts with five separate counties and that meant maintaining relationships and conducting negotiations with five separate county governments. I had done that for three years; I had run this circuit. I had attended alcohol advisory committee meetings in every one of the five counties. I had met with county alcohol administrators in every one of the five counties. I had met with the boards of all five NCA county committees and had a Bay Area board.

I was not only physically exhausted, I was mentally exhausted by 1975, and I was reaching that age where, at sixty-five, I could draw my modest retirement from the National Health and Welfare Retirement Association. Then Sanford Treguboff and John May and I had talked about developing a partnership and Treg offered me the assurance that when I walked into this office, that half of everything that he had going at that time would provide me with some income, and this was an opportunity. It was simply a gift.

Morris: That's a very handsome offer.

Pomeroy: It was incredibly generous. I have never known anybody else that I would think would be that generous, and I don't know of anybody else who has ever experienced anything quite like that. So my gratitude and my debt to Treg is just very great.

Morris: How did you and he become so well acquainted with each other's--

Pomeroy: When I first went to work for the Federated Fund, Bob Elliot, whom I had known years before in the State Relief Administration, and Treg as the executive of the Jewish Welfare Federation were the two senior agency people who were involved in the Federated Fund campaign on a volunteer basis. I renewed my association with Bob and became a very good friend of Treg's in the process. So my association with him went back to the first campaign of '54. Then over the years, whenever there were budget problems, as there always were for the major agencies, like Catholic Social Service, Jewish Welfare Federation, I maintained a very close working relationship with the heads of those agencies.

Morris: The New Directions report comments that the majority of volunteer agencies has a major financial crisis on the average of every two years. Would you say that that is--?

Pomeroy: Absolutely accurate, absolutely accurate. There has always been one very, very interesting difference between the Catholic Social Service, which was the nearest thing there was to a counterpart to the Jewish Community Welfare Federation, and that is that Catholic Social Service was always desperately poor and the Jewish Welfare Federation showed no signs of poverty. They always have a place for their money; there was always Israel and they always had to raise more money every year, but somehow they were able to come closer to meeting the needs of their agencies. This is traditional.

I had over the years maintained this very close working relationship and then we had developed a relationship with John May as the head of the San Francisco Foundation and he had involved himself. He had been a member of the Social Planning

Committee for many years. No, Treg didn't serve on the Social Planning Committee. Louis Weintraub did their social planning. But John and Treg and I, we got to where we--

Morris: You had been through the wars together.

Pomeroy: We had been through a number of wars together and when there would be some issue in the community that one of us thought the other two ought to be aware of, we would get together, and so we had founded what we called [laughs] a rather unholy triumvirate and people would just look at us and say, "If you see the three of them together, you better begin to worry!"

Morris: Something is going to happen.

Pomeroy: Something might be made to happen. Then when I, in about 1966, began to give birth to this idea of wanting to see whether the Council could be put on its feet, I asked Treg and John to have lunch with me and started the whole thing with them. So that is the genesis of the association that I had had with them. Then the three of us had talked about the fact that when we all retired from the demanding jobs that we were working in, we would form our own partnership and do something.

Morris: Do you recall offhand any other topics that the three of you got your heads together over?

Pomeroy: [pause] Interesting. Right off the top of my head, I don't.

Morris: Okay, maybe it will occur to you later. What appealed, in general, to the three of you and to you specifically about being consultants in philanthropy?

Pomeroy: There were two motivations. One, my personal situation was such that the combination of the modest little retirement that the National Health and Welfare Retirement Association would offer plus Social Security, should I choose to draw that, could not have begun to allow me to live as comfortably as I would like to live. So I had the incentive of wanting to supplement my income substantially. I had the further incentive of not being the slightest bit interested in getting into a rocking chair. There were a lot of volunteer things that I would like to continue to do, but if one is going to do those, you have to be able to afford them. So that was part of my motivation.

The other part of it was that I think the three of us have shared a very honest belief that the community has been very good to us. We have had experiences that have been very rewarding. We would like to return to the community some of the experience that might be helpful, and from the very beginning of our association

in terms of what we do, we say to almost anyone who comes to us, "Look, we don't know whether you need us or want us or can afford us or should, but we will always spend an hour, two hours with you, at absolutely no obligation of any kind. We will listen to whatever your problems are. We will then tell you whether we think there is anything that could be done professionally on a consulting basis that would be of value to you. If not, we'll share with you whatever our views are, whatever we think about it, and you can take our advice or not, whatever you like."

We have done that for many, many people with no thought of any cost. I think it probably has been to some extent of some help in guiding some people away from the idea that you can just buy some consulting help and solve the problem. We have gotten people to understand that, particularly where fundraising is concerned, that the investment that needs to be made is much more the investment of the volunteers involved in a program rather than the professional advice and that just hiring a fundraiser doesn't get you anywhere. You've got to have a plan because a fundraiser can't raise money for you. A fundraiser can help show you how to raise money, but the volunteers themselves have to go out and do it.

Morris: By and large, have people come to you because they want some advice on how the organization is running or primarily do they come saying, "We need another \$50,000 a year?"

Pomeroy: Both, and I would say they are perhaps fairly evenly divided. People come to us entirely by word of mouth. We have never had any kind of a public relations exposure of any kind. Martin Paley sends us people, the United Way sends us people. We do very few things for fees that have involved fundraising; we have taken on three or four fundraising projects, but in general, most of what we've done has been the work with foundations. That has been advising them with respect to the evaluation of grants and making recommendations on grants, and we have done much more on that than we have done of actual fundraising.

Morris: As a supplement to foundation staffs or in response to the general concern that foundations should have staffs?

Pomeroy: The specific foundations that we have worked with have been-- during the lifetime of Walter Haas, Sr. Treg was his consultant on his foundation and I shared in that while Mr. Haas was alive to the extent that I did some of the footwork in connection with it. Treg also had done the same thing with Peter Haas. We have run out of this office the Newhouse Foundation, which is a foundation that was created by three Jewish brothers to alleviate need and want on the part of Jews and to assist some Jewish agencies. The

only unique thing about the Newhouse Foundation is that one-third of everything they give away every year is divided equally between Cal and Stanford for scholarships.

Morris: Really? That's a need that never--

Pomeroy: It never runs out, yes. It's an interesting thing because none of the gentlemen married so they had no heirs, none of them had a college education, and the only restriction they placed on their funds going to the two universities was that no members of fraternities or sororities could receive scholarships.

Morris: That's a very Populist kind of approach, isn't it?

Pomeroy: Obviously. It was because there was discrimination in those days that fraternities and sororities probably were subjecting Jews to.

Morris: Do you find that the foundations that you advise are responsive to your suggestions or do they have fairly clear ideas of what they think the funds should do?

Pomeroy: The guidelines for the Newhouse Foundation really are prescribed in the will which set up the trust, so that the discretionary element there is very limited. We have been involved with other foundations, either together or each of us as an individual and in each of those cases, we helped in setting up their guidelines. Within the guidelines, they are very responsive to suggestion and recommendation.

Morris: Is part of it a matter of winnowing out the kind of requests that come in or part of it again is people evaluating what is going on in that community?

Pomeroy: It is a little bit of the latter, it is a little bit of the initiative on the part of the foundation, but in the main it is the winnowing out of the requests.

Morris: The role of foundations in the community is interesting. Over the years, how have foundations as a group and the United Way interacted?

Pomeroy: During the years that John May was at the San Francisco Foundation and I was at, first, San Francisco Fund and then the United Bay Area Crusade, the Foundation never accepted a proposal from a United Way agency without United Way endorsement. A number of foundations became rather sophisticated in their examination of proposals and would ask United Way for opinions when United Way agencies applied for grants. Whether they chose to restrict their

action as far as United Way agencies were concerned to those that met with United Way approval, I don't know, but they certainly would ask for information.

The one major problem that the community had a right--when I say community, I am thinking primarily of United Way--had a right to be concerned about was that if foundations were going to make grants to permit agencies to initiate new projects and the start up grants were going to be one, two, or three years, then where was the support going to come from to carry on that project, or was it going to be money down the drain? So the San Francisco Foundation began to realize rather quickly that it was in their interest to insure that the United Way was going to be willing to give consideration to--

Morris: And that United Way would know that down the line, the requests for funding were going to--

Pomeroy: Were going to have to come, yes.

Morris: Did anybody ever think of it as an overall pool, the money that United Way raised included in some sort of global total of the foundation money that was available year by year for grants plus what other, individual donors--?

Pomeroy: I don't think so. I think that that startling awareness has developed more in Marin County over the Buck Trust than it ever did in San Francisco, generally because the impact of that very large amount of money that has to be spent over there has done some incredible things to that community.

Morris: Do you have time to talk about two or three other things?

##

Pomeroy: I am just fascinated. Your durability is beyond description, of course.

Morris: I was feeling this morning that I hate to come to the end because there are always so many things I have not asked that I would like to know about. In terms of advising organizations about either program or goals or funding, what kind of contact did you have with some of the programs that developed over the last ten years, like the San Francisco Study Center and people like Larry Kramer, who were also consultants?

Pomeroy: I have had no involvement with the San Francisco Study Center. Larry Kramer and I have been friends since the day he arrived in San Francisco and we have maintained an ongoing relationship. The United Community Fund gave Larry his first contract when he became a consultant and it was in the alcoholism field.

Their bent had been somewhat different. Kramer and Blum, which is Larry's firm, has been quite different than ours in that they have done a number of studies for various organizations. But they also do much of the same thing we do. They are involved with a number of little foundations, and then they have done some consulting with organizations on fundraising.

Volunteer Chairman of the College of Podiatry Board

Pomeroy: In fact, Larry Kramer was directly responsible for getting me involved in a major volunteer activity that I took on after I became director of the Council on Alcoholism. I had said to Larry when we were having lunch one day that I needed some volunteer activity that had nothing to do with alcoholism, and I had not agreed to serve with any United Way agency because I had felt that my connection with them was too close and it was unfair to other agencies, so I just said uniformly no.

Larry had been doing a study with the California College of Podiatric Medicine and came up with the fact that they had never had a woman on their board. He felt that they better start to make that change and so suggested me to those people. The result was that I did six years on that board, including serving as chairman of the board when we built the new facility. So that is an example of my involvement with Larry Kramer.

Morris: I should say. That sounds like a fairly major involvement with the Podiatry College.

Pomeroy: So it turned out to be.

Morris: How did you find that? It sounds like indeed it was a different kind of organization than you had been working with.

Pomeroy: Yes, absolutely, and I certainly got led into it in part by the fact that my own podiarist was somebody who had kept me with happy feet for a long time. But it was a very interesting experience. The first thing we had to do was hire a new executive!

This was a small group of professional people who didn't really feel very professional because the orthopods had been telling them for years that they were not professionals, they were just foot doctors. It was a very interesting experience to share in helping to raise their professional consciousness, because they indeed were well trained. This podiatric college was doing a good training job. They were producing people with medical knowledge and skills with emphasis on the feet.

Morris: Certainly foot trouble is as chronic and debilitating as anything else in our society.

Pomeroy: Yes, so I found it a very worthwhile experience and I enjoyed it.

Morris: I assume that your skills were exceedingly useful to them. Were there things that you learned about how organizations functioned and the community functioned from them?

Pomeroy: It was a new experience to work with a group who had to be constantly reinforced, and I learned something about how you do that with professional people without offending their sensitivity.

Morris: That is kind of one of the credos of the nonprofit world is that the people involved need reinforcement more than in the business world.

Pomeroy: Yes.

California Council for the Humanities

Morris: Your resume also has you on the California Council of Humanities. Now, is that a different kind of--

Pomeroy: This is a new, new world. I am indebted to two wonderful women for this nomination to the Council, Aileen Hernandez and Jade Snow Wong. I find that the Council, which is responsible for the expenditure of approximately a million dollars a year in California--

Morris: And that is all public funding?

Pomeroy: All public funding yet it's a nonprofit private group that is not part of state or federal government.

Morris: But it exists in order to make these decisions about public funding?

Pomeroy: About the federal National Endowment for the Humanities money.

Morris: That is an interesting hybrid.

Pomeroy: You bet it's an interesting hybrid and it is one that Congress has been fighting against, but so far hasn't won any battles and are not likely to in this administration I would think. I don't think they'll insist. There is now a provision that the governor appoints four members to the Council, but that is the only way in which state government can influence the carrying out of the humanities endowment program in California.

Morris: Are you one of the governor's appointees?

Pomeroy: No. I am one of the nominated members of the Council by its own nominating process.

Morris: Which is: members of the Council constituted as a nominating committee?

Pomeroy: The Council board has a nominating committee. There are published announcements. You can nominate yourself or you can be nominated by somebody. But the final recommendation to the board for election, because they are elected by the board, is accomplished by a nominating committee that is part of the board, as in other non-profit corporations.

Morris: That's not in the best interest of organizational theory, I believe.

Pomeroy: It is not in the best interest of organizational theory. I think it has worked in this council--but with incredible integrity. I am just astounded at the lack of any indication of either individual or institutional self-interest being served by members on that Council. Really, it is very impressive.

Morris: And in the selection process?

Pomeroy: And in the selection process.

Morris: There is no membership per se?

Pomeroy: No, there is no membership per se. There is a Council of twenty-one members.

Morris: Is that an unwieldy number of people to--?

Pomeroy: Not for what has to be done. Do you see that brown envelope over there?

Morris: That's about three and a half inches thick.

- Pomeroy: Yes, and that has in it the grant proposals that I will review this coming weekend for a meeting of the grants committee that we will hold in Los Angeles on Wednesday. We will be spending the whole day going through and acting on--that's recommending to the Council as a whole.
- Morris: Is that all of the grants that have come in through this period, or did you just get assigned ones in a certain--?
- Pomeroy: No, we will be looking at all of the grants that have come in for this period; it's quarterly.
- Morris: Has it looked to you as if the existence of the Council and the grants that it makes has stimulated other grants for work in the humanities from either foundations or individual donors?
- Pomeroy: Oh, yes, because there are matching requirements and a rather intricate matching requirement process. To me, of course, this has been a fascinating experience because, first of all, my association with academia has been very limited over the years. I have a few good friends in the academic world. It's a new thing to find oneself in association with academics where you have to learn and understand what they are talking about if you are going to be any kind of an effective Council member or else become Miss Mouse, and I am very reluctant to ever get into the Miss Mouse stage.
- Morris: It doesn't seem characteristic.
- Pomeroy: It would be rather out of character.
- Morris: You view the Council as being primarily academic?
- Pomeroy: Oh, it is. There are about four of us who are not academic; maybe six now.
- Morris: Now, the general impression of the Council in the media is that it is given to making bizarre grants to barefoot dancers and people who are going to construct sculpture of oddments they find in the city dump. That's not a specific quotation; it's an extreme.
- Pomeroy: That's the Council on the Arts and not the Humanities.
- Morris: And you are two separate bodies?
- Pomeroy: Oh, totally, the Council on the Arts is a state body, state government. No, we are two separate--because you have two endowments at the federal level. You have the endowment for the arts and the endowment for the humanities. The only reason the humanities survived is because Charlton Heston was named by the president to head a task force to make a recommendation to him about

the arts and somehow the humanities got included with it. So we have survived along with the arts, and you knew the arts were going to survive under Reagan. He could not turn his back on that.

Public Funding Cutbacks and Potential Initiatives

Morris: The other thing that should be mentioned, I think, is Proposition 13 as a watershed that impacted--*

Pomeroy: It has not in San Francisco because of the bailout. It has not impacted alcoholism services drastically, but other community services have been severely affected. Of course, it's impacted education frightfully. But Proposition 13 in San Francisco, which is the place where I have watched it most carefully, has resulted in a--it's like a faucet dripping; it's wearing away some of the support. But it's also pretty difficult to pinpoint that it's Prop 13 because you also have had the withdrawal of CETA forces. You have had the withdrawal of a number of federal programs that have impacted in some of the same areas of service, and so you can't really lay it all at the door of Proposition 13.

Morris: But in general it is because of government cutbacks of one kind or another that there is--

Pomeroy: Yes, it seems so to me; it seems so to me. Look at the thing that Patty Costello and Libby Deneheim and Eva Maas devoted themselves to over a period of three years with the San Francisco Youth Campus, and I became involved--[tape interruption: telephone]

Morris: We were talking about the recent erosion on voluntary services by a variety of government actions.

Pomeroy: Yes, and it seems to me that it's getting very blurred. We were talking about the Youth Campus and the fact that originally, when the property was bought with a huge bank loan syndicated by five banks on a community service basis, the [S.F.] Department of Social Services offered every assurance that they would be able to

*Successful initiative measure in the June 1978 California ballot that sharply limited local property taxes. For several years following, the legislature appropriated surplus state funds to "bail out" or make up the loss of local tax revenues.

pay the cost of treatment for the severely emotionally disturbed children in San Francisco, the kids who had been previously shipped out of the community. By the time the operation was a year old and admittedly going through very troubled times, the Department of Social Service had backed out because of the withdrawal of some federal support, some state support, and as a result, the place was closed.

Morris: The bank loan has defaulted?

Pomeroy: The bank loan was defaulted, but after months of suspense, the property was sold and the banks paid. This is a pretty sad state of affairs because I think it's going to be a long, hot day in the middle of winter before five banks ever get together again to syndicate a \$2.5 million dollar loan for a nonprofit institution.

Morris: The interesting thing is that Prop 13 is described as a cutback in state funds, but Prop 13 was by nature a citizen action--the majority of the people voting in the 1978 election chose to cut their own property taxes--and it leads you to wonder what that says about what citizens think about voluntary activities and government support of voluntary activities.

Pomeroy: I doubt very much that the people that responded--and it's true, the property taxes have been escalating and escalating and escalating--but the people who responded to the appeal of what Proposition 13 could do for each of them personally in the reduction of taxes did so without any thought about anything except what it was going to mean to them personally. I never examined carefully who financed the support for the passage of Proposition 13, but I have a feeling that there may have been a great deal of corporate or corporate related funding of that campaign, focused on the fact that any reduction in taxes meant a reduction in government and the reduction in government was desirable from the standpoint of the conservative business person.

Morris: Specifically, I think Howard Jarvis [co-author of the Proposition 13 initiative] was closely identified with various real estate organizations.

Pomeroy: Yes, yes.

Morris: Last month there was an article in the Rockefeller Foundation newsletter [RF Illustrated] magazine about the future of the voluntary sector that talked about the corrosion by government of voluntary activity. Is that related to what you were saying about the erosion of government funding?

Pomeroy: Yes, and something if we had started to talk about I couldn't do in three minutes, but I feel very strongly that voluntary organizations have made a serious error in participating to the degree that they have in public funding because I think it has corroded the private support.

Morris: Does this indicate perhaps some kind of a need to reassess the kinds of services that voluntary agencies are doing or do best?

Pomeroy: What it suggests to me is that there is really a place for a public-private partnership, but that it needs to be very carefully thought through, it needs to be developed with the complete consensus of the private leadership so that they don't withdraw their support once the public part of the partnership becomes operative. I do see a place for the public-private joint effort because there is no question that a number of voluntary agencies can provide valuable services at much less cost than if they are part of the civil service institution, and with a lot more heart.

Morris: Do you see the possibility of developing a consensus, a single voice, and unanimity in the private sector, say in the Bay Area, in terms of its commitment to the voluntary sector and how the voluntary sector should--?

Pomeroy: I don't know. I hope we will see something like this emerging possibly in the Independent Sector which is, as you know, headed up by John Gardner. When they bring this down, as they are hoping to, to the level of the local community, I think we may see the formulation of some concepts that will result in real leadership in this area.

Morris: With an apparatus for local participation and local discussion?

Pomeroy: I hope so.

Morris: That sounds like a good place to stop. I can't tell you how much I enjoyed talking with you, and I feel like we've only scratched the surface.

Pomeroy: Yes, we have just started; we have just begun.

Transcriber: Michelle Stafford
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United Community Fund of San Francisco

M I N U T E S

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 4, 1961 - 12:00 noon
Commercial Club - Room 2

PRESENT

Norman Coliver, Chairman
 Peter Arnstein
 Richard L. Frank
 Mrs. Kenneth R. MacDonald
 Samuel B. Stewart
 Frank D. Tatum, Jr.
 Mary B. Olney, M.D. (Ex Officio)

ABSENT

W. W. Davison
 Edward P. Kemnitz
 Mrs. Otto N. Miller
 Don Fazackerley (Ex Officio)

STAFF PRESENT

Mrs. Florette Pomeroy
 Richard Phenix

INTRODUCTIONS:

Mr. Coliver, presiding, introduced Dr. Olney, ex officio member appointed by the Health Council chairman, Dr. Smyth, at Mr. Coliver's request. Dr. Olney is Health Council vice chairman, executive director of the Diabetic Youth Foundation, and past member of the executive committee, Group Work & Recreation Council.

MINUTES:

Mr. Frank noted that the motion with respect to Presbyterian Hospital in the minutes for December 2, 1960, was not worded as he had proposed it. As its effect was the same, however, the minutes were accepted as submitted.

ITALIAN
WELFARE
AGENCY:

Mr. Coliver reviewed the action of the committee at its last meeting supporting the view that the Italian Welfare Agency membership in UCF should be continued. In the review the question was raised whether the action gave undue emphasis to the campaign value of the agency and insufficient attention to the matter of the services of the agency and the appropriateness of UCF support for them. The question was posed: if this agency is not one which could be appropriately dropped from membership, what agency, under what circumstances, should be?

In discussion these points emerged: The Membership Committee function is to look at all aspects of an agency membership, of which campaign value is only one; another, sometimes, is the amount of money appropriated to an agency (in this case some \$4,000 annually - which might be too little, it was suggested, to justify taking the public relations risk of membership termination); others include the services an agency gives and how much, and whether the agency plays a part in social planning. It was stated that the agency does give service and of a kind needed by older Italians in the community - so that in that sense it was "up to standard"; and it was pointed out that services to older persons of the general kind given by the agency are being expanded throughout the City.

ITALIAN
WELFARE
AGENCY
(cont.)

It was recalled that no actual recommendations for terminating the agency have been made: the Budget Study Committees have simply requested study of the question; Social Planning Staff (in 1958) indicated only that the agency might be considered in a "decreasing need" category.

It was agreed that the decision made at the last meeting was by no means based solely on campaign factors; it was further agreed that the case for continued membership of the agency as outlined at the last meeting was a valid one, and that there was no clear-cut case against continuation. There was discussion of the draft recommendation to the Board prepared by staff and it was accepted with the following changes:

- (1) The 1953 Study Committee Statement quoted would instead be paraphrased for easier reading;
- (2) The final paragraph (the "second recommendation") would be limited to a recommendation that the agency membership status be reviewed within five years.

CHINESE
HOSPITAL

Mr. Phenix reported that the Social Planning Committee suggested that the material available in UCF offices on the Chinese Hospital constitute its "agency program report" - which, according to the By-laws, the Membership Committee must have prior to taking action. Much of this material had been made available already, and Mr. Phenix reviewed it, also reporting on campaign aspects: The Chinese Six Companies which is responsible for the Hospital, raised approximately \$17,000 for the Crusade this year, and it is possible that this sum - or the \$10,400 allocated to the Chinese Hospital by UCF - could be lost to the campaign if the Hospital membership is terminated.

In discussion these points came out: the Hospital has no out-patient department, and is budgeted on a lump sum basis with statistics on free and part-pay patient days providing the chief guidance; the Hospital cannot easily be classified by budget committees - methodologies, service philosophies, administration and accounting are all deeply rooted in the culture pattern of the Chinese; all accounts are kept in Chinese - with the result that it is next to impossible to make comparisons with other hospitals. An additional problem mentioned: the hospital administrator has been there many years; in his eighties, he is an institution himself, and currently there is small likelihood of changes to conform to American patterns.

Unanswered questions: does the Hospital follow the policy adopted in 1956 of sending to San Francisco Hospital all patients unable to pay after 90 days? (In view of the difficulties Chinese reportedly experience in American hospitals, it was thought probable that only in a minimum of such cases would policy be applied.) Would some arrangement be possible whereby the City Health Department would make payments to the Hospital for appropriate cases, in lieu of the costs of care the City would otherwise have to carry for

CHINESE
HOSPITAL
(cont.)

the same cases? Would it be possible to sit down with representatives of the Chinese Six Companies to discuss the questions which trouble the Budget Study Committees? Might not the cost to the community for comparable care elsewhere, be more than the \$10,400 UCF pays for care at Chinese Hospital? (It was thought that it indeed would.)

General discussion indicated that the Committee saw no valid reason for terminating the Hospital's membership, and that there was evidence that the community got rather more than \$10,400 worth of services for its money. There was strong support for exploration of the idea of City payments to the Hospital. It was

MSC to recommend to the Board of Directors continuation of the present membership status of Chinese Hospital, and that UCF take the initiative to explore the possibility of the Hospital receiving direct financial assistance from the City.

The comments were made that it was rather interesting that the two agencies discussed today gave service to the two largest nationality groups in San Francisco; and that probably eventually need for UCF support for them would disappear.

ALCOHOLICS
REHABILITATION
ASSOCIATION

Mr. Phenix reported that the Alcoholics Rehabilitation Association had written on December 30 of its intent to apply for membership if preliminary investigation indicated to them that they might be eligible for consideration. A reply invited the agency to come in for preliminary discussions at once and stated that the Membership Committee would undoubtedly take into sympathetic consideration the fact that the letter of intent, if not an actual application, was dated prior to the December 31 deadline. The Committee set January 31, 1961 as the deadline for submission of the fully completed application, and requested staff to so advise the agency.

UBAC
CRITERIA

A revision of UBAC criteria for agency memberships and policies relating to the financing of newly admitted agencies have been proposed by the United Bay Area Crusade for ratification by its Fund members. These should be reviewed by the Membership Committee and recommendations made to the UCF Board in time for its January 30 meeting. Copies will be mailed to Committee members immediately, and the matter will be first on the agenda at the next Committee meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was set for 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, January 25, in the Legal Department Conference Room, Bank of America, Fourth Floor, 300 Montgomery Street.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Richard Phenix,
Secretary

NOTE: Received after this date, but dated before the December 31, 1960 deadline: membership application from the May T. Morrison Center for Rehabilitation.

United Community Fund of San Francisco

M I N U T E S

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 25, 1961 - 3:30 p.m.
 Legal Department Conference Room, 4th Floor
 Bank of America, 300 Montgomery Street

PRESENT

Norman Coliver, Chairman
 W. W. Davison
 Richard L. Frank
 Mrs. Kenneth R. MacDonald
 Mary B. Olney, M.D. (Ex Officio)

ABSENT

Peter Arnstein
 Edward P. Kemmitt
 Mrs. Otto N. Miller
 Samuel B. Stewart
 Frank D. Tatum, Jr.
 Don Fazackerley (Ex Officio)

STAFF PRESENT

Mrs. Florette Pomeroy
 Richard Phenix

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of January 4, 1961 were approved as mailed.

UBAC
CRITERIA

The entire meeting was devoted (A): to discussion of the material referred by the Board of Directors: (1) the UBAC Executive Committee-approved "Recommended Revision of Section 8, Criteria for Admission", initiated by the UBAC Special Committee on Admissions, and (2) the similarly approved basic and specific policies recommended on December 8, 1960 by the same committee; and (B) to a review of UBAC's "Criteria For Admission to a United Fund or Crusade Member of United Bay Area Crusade", approved by UBAC Executive Committee on April 26, 1956 as amended on 4/4/56 (Section 20) and 12/22/60 (Section 8), as supplemented on June 28, 1956 by an interpretation of Section 11. (Copies attached to original copy of these minutes.)

Discussion was in the light of these facts: the UBAC criteria were approved by member Funds in all counties, in 1956. The San Francisco member then was the Federated Fund. When the Federated Fund and Community Chest merged, the United Community Fund became responsible for commitments made by both organizations. No review of the criteria had been made since; it seemed appropriate to conduct one at this time. The criteria were designed to be used by all counties so that membership application procedures would be reasonably standard. An agency with branches in two counties applying for membership in each, therefore, would not face two sets of requirements. (Processing procedure might, of course, vary from county to county.) Review of the criteria should be made with the fact in mind that as a Bay-wide approved instrument, it would be the foundation on which

URAC
CRITERIA
 (cont.)

the Membership Committee would be building admission procedures replacing those inherited from the Community Chest and Federated Fund.

Criteria
Number 1

Regret was expressed over use of the word "non-controversial" but it was agreed that it was probably useful to include it in the text.

Number 4

Not really a "criterion".

Number 8 -
Action

The Committee approved the amendment.

Number 9

Interpreted to mean that the prospective member agency must understand that its initial request for funds will not necessarily be met, and that membership is in no way contingent upon the outcome of the Crusade's campaign.

Number 13

It was felt that this criterion might usefully spell out the kinds of activities approved -- or make reference to existing policy statements on this matter.

Number 14

There was some discussion about capital assets, designated and undesignated gifts. It was agreed that this criterion was wise -- recognizing the right of individuals to declare how their gifts should be used, the rights of agency boards to determine their use within donor-prescribed limits, and the fact that some agencies with dual or more functions cannot, or do not wish, to distinguish capital funds applying to social service functions from those applying to other functions. Church agencies are an example.

Number 15

The Committee had some feeling that (a) this paragraph was really procedural, and (b) might be interpreted as bearing on the substance, not the form, of financial relationships. It was thought it could be rephrased into more general terms, permitting each County Fund to follow the intent of the paragraph without being unnecessarily restricted procedurally.

Number 16

The comment was made that this protected the Crusade, indicating the Crusade's official disapproval of violations of immunity.

Number 18

This paragraph also protects the Crusade: it puts member agencies on notice that they and the Crusade are "public employees" in a sense, and must live in a goldfish bowl. Certainly "extent and terms of participation" are seldom made into news releases, but if there was a demand for information concerning them, it would be made available.

Number 20

Procedural, reflecting the timetable dictated by the campaign process. By April 1 literature is being prepared for the Fall campaign, and the list of member agencies must be established by that time.

UBAC

CRITERIA

(cont.)

Supplement

It was felt that if the "Criteria" document were to be revised the substance of this might be incorporated therein.

Action

The Committee asked that an informal suggestion be communicated to UBAC that the document be revised -- not because of any feeling that significant changes in substance were needed, but to separate criteria from procedure and both from occasional declarations in the nature of policy statements. A more organized document would be easier to use with member agencies.

ADMISSIONS
POLICIES

Last year the strong view emerged that a procedure should exist making possible the adjustment of County Fund bases when agencies were added or dropped. These new policies will make possible a base increase for a County Fund consequent to its proposed admission of a new agency. The effect on admission procedures is that one more step is added: after membership for a new agency is approved in all other respects, the proposal will then be made to UBAC that the agency be admitted. If a base adjustment is approved the agency can then be admitted with little chance of this working a financial hardship on existing members. If no base adjustment is made, the agency can still be admitted but only after further consideration by the Fund as to whether overall advantages to having the new member would outweigh possible financial disadvantages to other agencies: if the campaign were to raise no more than the previous one, the same amount of money would have to be divided among more agencies.

Another effect will be to preclude the possibility of having Fund members which are non-budget participating (there are at present no such agencies in UCF). New members shall have equal budget consideration with other agencies; and membership shall not be contingent upon campaign results.

The provisions of paragraph 4 make it possible for Funds to encourage agencies to merge or discontinue service along sound social planning lines, without fear of financial loss through an automatic decrease in base.

Action

Committee consensus: a recommendation go to the Board of Directors that the proposed Policies be approved by UCF.

ADJOURNMENT;
NEXT MEETING

The hour of five o'clock having arrived, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting was scheduled for

Wednesday, February 8

12:00 noon

Jack's Restaurant - 615 Sacramento

Richard Phenix
Secretary

United Community Fund of San Francisco

M I N U T E S

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 8, 1961 - 12:00 noon
Jack's Restaurant

PRESENT

Norman Coliver, Chairman
 Peter Arnstein
 W. W. Davison
 Richard L. Frank
 Mrs. Kenneth R. MacDonald
 Mrs. Otto H. Miller
 Mary B. Olney, M.D. (Ex Officio)

ABSENT

Don Frazierley (Ex Officio)
 Edward P. Kemmitt
 Samuel B. Stewart
 Frank D. Tatum, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT

Mrs. Florette Pomaroy
 Richard Puenix

PRESIDING

Norman Coliver, Chairman, presided.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of February 8 and February 15 were approved as mailed with one change in the former: on page 3, the next to the last paragraph discussing priorities - it was agreed that it gave too limited a picture of the discussion; it was agreed a notation should appear on the official copy of the minutes referring to continuing discussion of the matter as covered by the minutes of the meeting of March 8, 1961.

COMMITTEE
ACTIVITY
SINCE ITS
APPOINTMENT

Mr. Coliver noted that in its 5 meetings since December 1960 the Committee had been active with respect to Presbyterian Hospital, Chinese Hospital, Italian Welfare Agency, Alcoholics Rehabilitation Association and the May T. Morrison Center for Rehabilitation. All assignments have been carried to completion or as far as possible at this time, the latter including:

Presbyterian Hospital -- no further action possible until Social Planning and Health Council study the questions involved - including at some point that of private versus tax funds for hospital support. Staff is to follow up and be sure this study begins shortly.

Alcoholics Rehabilitation Association -- the agency has been informally notified that further consideration of it for membership must be postponed pending study of the whole field of services to alcoholics in San Francisco by the Health Committee's committee on alcoholism. Formal notification has been held up pending the Membership Committee's disposition of most recent developments. (The Committee agreed to forward all papers and information to the Health Council, via Social Planning.)

May T. Morrison -- It was agreed that there was no likelihood of the study report arriving from Social Planning in time for Membership Committee action this year, and, indeed, that it would be a mistake to try to further rush matters.

CURRENT
APPLICATIONS

After discussion, it was

MSC to report to the Board of Directors that because of the time factor it would be impossible for further action to be taken on the three applications at this time; that the recommendation go to the Board that the latter two agencies be notified of this fact formally, and that the three applications be considered in a "pending" status - with the understanding that the time factor made any action impossible, and not specifically either their approval or disapproval.

PRIORITIES

Further to the discussion at the February 8 meeting, it was agreed that while it might be impractical to ask Social Planning for the number of agencies it considered in a decreasing need category (for budget support), on each occasion that that Committee recommended approval for membership of a new agency, it could reasonably be expected of Social Planning that it provide guidelines as to areas of greatest or less need. The Committee noted that the Social Planning Committee is continuously concerned with the process of developing guidelines to aid in judgment of priority needs in the community.

The setting of priorities is an immensely complex process; among the major cities in the country which have tried it, none has done so with enough success, perhaps, to justify enormous amounts of time and effort expended. San Francisco will have to get into the question, but has so far felt it wise to move slowly and watch other efforts. It is possible that questions recently posed by Mrs. Charles' committee may be moving Social Planning into another phase of exploration of priorities.

APPLICATION
PROCEDURE

The balance of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the staff-drafted application procedure proposals. Changes were made as indicated by the "Draft B" pages attached to these minutes.

NEXT MEETING
ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was set for Jack's for Friday, March 17, at noon.

Richard Phenix,
Secretary

DRAFT "E" 3/8/61

Page 1
(This document designed for
internal UCF use only)

United Community Fund of San Francisco

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR
UNITED COMMUNITY FUND AGENCY MEMBERSHIPS

1. Applications should be addressed to the President of the United Community Fund of San Francisco, 2015 Steiner Street (15).
2. Applications must be made on the form provided by the United Community Fund (or a facsimile thereof) and include all the attachments requested on the form.
3. Applications must be received, complete, on or before (DATE TO BE SET) of a given year in order to be considered for inclusion in the URAC campaign in the following year, for allocation of funds for the budget year following the campaign. (Example: An application received in June 1960 would be considered for the Fall, 1961 Campaign; if accepted, budget participation would begin for the fiscal year starting March 1, 1962.)
4. Applications shall be referred to the Membership Committee and to the Social Planning Committee on "Referral of Membership Application" forms. (See form on following pages.) The original application and attachments shall go to the Membership Committee.
5. The Membership Committee shall be responsible for certifying the compliance of the application with all procedures called for and so notifying the Social Planning Committee. It shall also be responsible
 - a) for establishing the eligibility of the applying organization for membership with respect to those criteria listed under Section I of the "Referral of Membership Application" form;
 - b) for providing the Social Planning Committee (or its designated study body) with any information it requests relevant to Section I.
6. The Social Planning Committee shall be responsible for establishing the eligibility of the applying organization for membership with respect to those criteria listed under Section II of the "Referral of Membership Application" form. (It may designate a Study Committee, Council or other subordinate body to undertake the necessary study.) The Social Planning Committee shall submit its report to the Board of Directors, simultaneously providing the Membership Committee with a copy.
7. The Membership Committee shall make recommendations for Board action based on its own work and the report of the Social Planning Committee not later than March of the year in which the applying organization is to be considered for inclusion in the campaign.

APPLICATION FOR AGENCY MEMBERSHIP
IN THE
UNITED COMMUNITY FUND OF SAN FRANCISCO

TO _____, President, United Community Fund
of San Francisco, 2015 Steiner Street, San Francisco 15, California.

The _____, at _____
(Legal name) (Address)

hereby applies for budget-participating agency membership in the United Community Fund of San Francisco. The agency agrees, upon admission to such membership, to comply with the provisions of the by-laws and the "Agreement With Member Agencies", copies of which have been received.

Signature of President

(Date)

Signature of Secretary

BALANCE SHEET

As of _____
(Date)

| <u>ASSETS</u> | <u>AMOUNT</u> | <u>LIABILITIES</u> | <u>AMOUNT</u> |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Cash and Bank Balances | \$ _____ | Accounts Payable | \$ _____ |
| Accounts Receivable | _____ | Notes Payable | _____ |
| Investment in Securities | _____ | Mortgages | _____ |
| Land, Buildings & Fixtures | _____ | Funds held in trust: | |
| Furniture and Equipment | _____ | Unrestricted Funds | _____ |
| | | Restricted - by terms | |
| | | of Trust | _____ |
| | | - by the | |
| | | Agency's Option | _____ |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$ _____ | TOTAL LIABILITIES | \$ _____ |

Attached are the following:

- a) Names and addresses of agency officers, and of members of the agency's governing body.
- 5) Statements on history, purpose and functions of the agency.
- c) Statement on its formal relationships with other agencies, affiliates, and/or auxiliaries, if any.
- d) Copies of the agency's articles of incorporation and by-laws.
- e) Copies of documents confirming tax-exempt status of agency.
- f) Reports on services rendered by the agency for each of the preceding three years. Include statistics where applicable.
- g) Financial reports as follows:
 - The most recent audit report;
 - detailed account (using United Community Fund Form #1) of operating income and expenditures for three years - past, current and estimated next; this should isolate local, state, national and/or international income and expenditures where such exist; it should isolate expense items incurred in fund raising in each of the years, with special note made of those items for fund raising campaigns which will be discontinued if membership in the United Community Fund is approved.

MISS EVA HANCE
1125 FILBERT STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94109

June 18, 1972

Dear Berette

I hope we can make this short!
Autobiographies and where as
Love always seemed to me to be
superfluous. But here it is:

I was born in Prescott Arizona
and spent my childhood in
northern Arizona, mostly having
fun & going to public country
schools.

Graduated from Phoenix High
School and Arizona State
University. From there -

I was teaching Mexican
children ^{in Phoenix} to read and speak
English - a place the schools
on the Border developed -
so the children could enter
the English language classes.
The youngsters were 5-17.
We had fun! They all talked at once

From that job I joined the staff of the American National Red Cross, Pacific Area, with headquarters in San Francisco. That was where I learned a great lesson about community service. After ten years of serving in a variety of positions Alita and I decided there was a school of social work we wanted like to attend - The School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, we resigned and set forth.

From Chicago, as you know, I went to Los Angeles to develop a planning Council while trying to cope with the Great Depression. It was a mon-killer but a great experience with wonderful people. You were there!

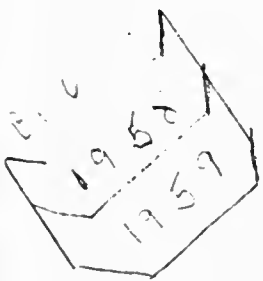
I joined the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, ~~and~~ WPA later, in the Western Area, Hdqrs first in San Francisco, later Salt Lake. The Area in -

cluded the "Arid States" or "Cow-Country" - Quater mine - and the coast, Hawaii and Alaska. ^{Then went to}

Then I went to Oakland to develop a planning council. Soon the U.S. was in the war and after five years in Oakland with a wonderful group of people and the fast growing new population, Rausome Parker, ~~so~~ Community Chest Executive, asked me to come to the Social Planning Dept. I did - January 1943. So here I am.

Sorry I write so badly, I have a sore thumb.

As always
Eda



APPENDIX C

PREPARED - United Bay Area Crusade
1955 -

| YEAR | PRESIDENT | ADDRESS | PHONE |
|------|----------------------------|--|----------|
| 1955 | Frederic B. Whitman | 5727 La Salle Oakland 94611 339-8904 | 339-8904 |
| 1956 | Samuel B. Stewart | Executive Vice President- Senior Administrative Officer Bank of America, N.T. & S.A. 300 Montgomery Street San Francisco 94120 622-2217 | 622-2217 |
| 1957 | Samuel B. Stewart | - C - | |
| 1958 | Norris Nash | 145 Alvarado Road Berkeley 94705 845-7863 | 845-7863 |
| 1959 | Mortimer Fleischacker, Jr. | Alcoa Building - Room 1340 One Maritime Plaza San Francisco 94111 981-5912 | 981-5912 |
| 1960 | Mortimer Fleischacker, Jr. | - O - | |
| 1961 | Harry R. Lange | 3507 Willis Court Oakland 94619 531-1258 | 531-1258 |
| 1962 | Burnham Emerson | McCutcheon, Doyle, Brown & Emerson 601 California Street San Francisco 94108 981-3400 | 981-3400 |
| 1963 | Nils Eklund | Vice President Kaiser Industries Corporation 300 Lakeside Drive Oakland 94604 271-2616 | 271-2616 |
| 1964 | Nils Eklund | - O - | |
| 1965 | Robert D. Lyphart, Jr. | President Frank P. Hall & Co. of California 44 Montgomery Street San Francisco 94104 981-2777 | 981-2777 |
| 1966 | Nils Eklund | - O - | |
| 1967 | Sherrill L. Staley | President Pacific Gas & Electric Co. 245 Market Street San Francisco 94106 | 941-1006 |
| 1968 | E. P. Bingham | President Southern Pacific Co. 65 Market Street - S.F. 94105 392-1112 | 392-1112 |

Witt A. Johnson

Chairman Board
Citicorp-Citibank National Bank
1 Montgomery Street
San Francisco 94120
983-3316

John G. Neukom

Managing Director
McKinsey & Co.
150 California Street
San Francisco 94111
981-0290

An Inter-Agency Workshop
Concerned with Program Planning
for Alcoholism in a Large
Metropolitan Community

Proceedings of a Conference

Sponsored by

COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM, HEALTH COUNCIL
UNITED COMMUNITY FUND OF SAN FRANCISCO

Co-sponsored by

California Department of Mental Hygiene
California Department of Public Health
San Francisco Medical Society
San Francisco Council on Alcoholism
San Francisco Association for Mental Health
San Francisco Department of Public Health

A Technical Assistance Project of the United States
Public Health Service
(National Institute of Mental Health)

January 26, 27, 28, 1962

San Francisco, California

FOREWORD

A survey of physicians in San Francisco made in 1957 by a committee of the Health Council, United Community Fund, indicated that one of the major unmet problems in San Francisco was alcoholism. The study indicated that alcoholism was a major and costly cause of illness and disability in spite of the interest and efforts of the Mayor, Department of Public Health and many public and private agencies -- efforts more extensive than those in many other communities.

The study, made by the Community Health Services Committee of the Health Council, established some of the dimensions of the alcoholism problem in San Francisco. The report indicated an estimated 26,000 alcoholics with physical or mental complications of alcoholism and possibly 50,000 more who had problems in connection with their drinking. It was estimated that about 6,000 San Franciscans received some sort of care for alcoholism each year at various public and private resources in the community or in state hospitals. However this was less than a quarter of the individuals suffering from chronic alcoholism with mental or physical symptoms. The report indicated that despite the many programs operating in San Francisco they were not adequately meeting the problem. The report made a series of recommendations directed to improving the situation.

In October 1960 the Health Council of the United Community Fund established a Committee on Alcoholism and requested the Committee to implement these recommendations. It became strikingly clear that while many were concerned about alcoholism, there was a lack of inter-agency planning or coordination. The various agencies working in the fields of education, prevention, rehabilitation and treatment had, in most cases, not developed a system of referrals and often had no working relationships with other groups.

Accordingly there appeared to be a need for a conference whereby agencies and their staffs could become better acquainted with the programs and services provided by similarly interested organizations. It was expected that as an outgrowth of such a conference there might be more effective planning between agencies involved with this problem. This inter-agency planning would permit the best use of resources to help the individual alcoholic and his family.

This publication of the proceedings of the conference held at Santa Rosa, 50 miles from San Francisco, on January 26, 27 and 28, 1962 has captured the flavor of the presentations. The necessary editing and condensation has retained in capsule form the contributions of the more than 60 active participants. The conference was characterized by an enthusiastic and vigorous consideration of the manifold problems of alcoholism in a metropolitan center and the means of coping with them.

A study of the attitudes of the participants before and after the conference reflected a remarkable shift in their concepts and thinking and indicated that the conference had been an educational experience for all in attendance.

The unanimous endorsement by the conference participants of the Committee on Alcoholism has stimulated the Committee to even more active efforts to seek solutions to this perplexing problem.

Alfred Auerback, M.D.
Chairman
Committee on Alcoholism
Health Council
United Community Fund of San Francisco

COMMONWEALTH NATIONAL BANK OF SAN FRANCISCO

DON FAZACKERLEY SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

October 31, 1967

Dear Florette:

As I promised myself when I skimmed your letter of October 24 I have now read the proposal provided. Having been exposed to this program and financing problem a few months ago I surely agree that you are the kind of medicine they need to get going. They have had the usual problem of lots of program zeal combined with fiscal apathy and ignorance.

The job should be done and if it can be done you will do it. Let me know how I can help (as long as I don't have to go dry to do it).

Sincerely,



DF/ks

P.S. Thanks for them kind words. Flattery will get you - everywhere.

Mrs. Florette White Pomeroy
2015 Steiner Street
San Francisco, California 94115

CROWN ZELLERBACH CORPORATION

ONE RUSH STREET

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94119

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

October 31, 1967

PERSONAL

Mrs. Florette White Pomeroy
2015 Steiner Street
San Francisco, 15, California

Dear Florette:

Your warm and thoughtful letter is one I shall always treasure.

You were indeed considerate to write me in advance of your intended move. I am deeply appreciative of being included in the inner circle of friends.

It is naturally a source of regret that you are leaving UBAC. It is, however, completely understandable to me. There is simply no denying the fact that something of value has been lost in the transition from the United Community Fund to UBAC. The development was inevitable and necessary, but there is far less appeal in the new organization. Also, you should have the aspiration to serve as an executive director, rather than in a secondary role.

The entire community owes you a great deal for your thirteen years of invaluable service. Our debt may be even greater when you have had the opportunity to bring your talents to bear on this important new activity.

My duties at Crown Zellerbach seem to preclude taking any significant part in San Francisco's social welfare program. Accordingly, I count myself extremely fortunate that past activity included association with you and Hyman Kaplan.

Every good wish for a happy and successful future.

Cordially,

J. Blumlein

m

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO MEDICAL CENTER

368

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94122

November 8, 1967

Dear Florette:

The announcement of your departure from the United Bay Area Crusade has caused quite a stir among your large entourage of friends and admirers. To most of us it seems impossible to consider even the existence of this organization without your important role in it.

Nevertheless, in light of the current situation it is not surprising that you have decided to put your efforts where they will be more appreciated.

Janey and I wish you satisfaction and good luck with hopes that we will have many future contacts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "B. Roe".

Benson B. Roe, M.D.
Professor

Mrs. Florette White Pomeroy
67 San Carlos Avenue
Sausalito, California

United Bay Area Crusade

San Mateo County District

2297 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, California 94402 . P.O. Box 50
345-4871

MEMORANDUM

TO: Florette Pomeroy

DATE: December 4, 1967

FROM: Warren Dobbs

SUBJECT:

I can't let your leaving go by without offering a word of thanks for your personal kindness to me. You have been a valued advisor and willing helper on many occasions during the past two years. I have learned much from you and will miss your unique perspective -- at once commanding and feminine -- quite a combination!

Best wishes for your continued success.

WCD/hm





The NATIONAL COUNCIL on ALCOHOLISM, Inc

N. Y. Academy of Medicine Building • 2 East 103rd Street, New York, N. Y. 10029

Cable Address: Nacounal

OFFICERS

Chairman of the Board, HON. JOHN M. MURTAGH

President, THOMAS P. CARPENTER

Vice Presidents, MARVIN A. BLOCK, M.D., F. FORSHA RUSSELL

Secretary, MRS. ALLEN R. THURMAN

Treasurer, AUSTIN MacCORMICK

Executive Director, MRS. MARTY MANN

February 2, 1968

Mrs. Florette Pomeroy, Executive Director
NCA - San Francisco Area
2340 Clay Street, Suite 407
San Francisco, California 94115

Dearest Florette:

I meant to have a warm welcome note awaiting you when you sat down at your desk, but I think you may have heard by now of the excitement going on in this office with the new executive director coming. He is a wonderful guy and we are all very happy about it. You will have a chance to meet him firsthand, for he will be at the Regional Meeting in San Francisco in March, although he does not officially take over his duties until April 1.

This letter is about another matter. You know perhaps that I am on the 18-member National Advisory Committee on Alcoholism, whose mandate is to make recommendations to the Secretary of HEW. The first subcommittee on which I served was on hospitals with Mark Berke (of Mt. Zion Hospital) as Chairman, and we made a number of very specific and very strong recommendations. As the result of one of them the new National Center for Prevention and Control of Alcoholism is planning to set up pilot hospitalization programs in 20 hospitals around the country. As a first move they have employed a consultant named Dr. Jack Sturrock to help select these hospitals. He is a psychiatrist, and Australian, and from Boston - I assume from Harvard since he seems to be a long-time colleague of Dr. Jack Mendelson, formerly of Harvard and now director of the National Center.

Dr. Sturrock reported at the last meeting of the National Advisory Committee in New Orleans January 18-19 on his first exploration which was in the Bay Area, and all Committee members were given a copy of his report. I do not imagine for a moment that Committee members are supposed to circulate this, but I felt compelled to make confidential copies available both to you and to Jack Guest.

The report is shocking, even beyond what I had expected. But it is very good for the powers that be to know this. Sturrock further stated while giving the report that he could do a little booklet

Mrs. Florette Pomeroy
February 2, 1968

Page -2-

on what to him were the fantastic and quite unbelievable statements made by physicians in the area, of which he gave a sample in the report.

Inasmuch as getting all general hospitals to accept the acutely sick alcoholic as a legitimate medical emergency is one of the stated goals of NCA and particularly of its affiliates, I feel strongly that you should have this information. I am also sending a copy to Jack Guest. Maybe this should be the area to which the San Francisco Council should address itself most strongly for at least a while, but that of course is up to you. But it is good at least to have the backing and moral support of the federal alcoholism program.

I can't tell you how I am looking forward to seeing you, and we must make time to have a real talk together.

With warmest affection,

Marty

(Mrs.) Marty Mann
Executive Director

MM/bg
Enc.

FROM: John B. Sturrock, M.D.

TO: Jack Mendelson, M.D.

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: REPORT ON TRIP TO SAN FRANCISCO AREA/OCTOBER 16-22, 1967.

Nine hospitals and clinics were contacted and several more individual contacts were made, as well as two visits to the N.I.M.H. regional office. General impressions and opinions will be noted first, followed by reports on individual hospitals.

GENERAL There is no uniformity of attitude or management in the area; there is no individual or group that seems consensually identified with alcoholism. Although, in terms of literature and meetings at least, there is interest and activity at the state level not too much seems to have percolated to the Bay area. Local government efforts are patchy and, some suggest, due to personality clashes and political issues, not of any apparent influence with the voluntary hospitals. Parenthetically, I was given the impression from several sources that there is more interest and cohesion in tackling alcohol related problems in the L.A. area. I did not have time to check this out. It was surprising that those few individuals who were interested in alcoholism didn't seem to have very clear ideas about what each other were doing; there are exceptions to this which I will mention later.

It was mentioned so often, and I observed it myself with sufficient frequency that credence must be given the statement that staff and attending physicians form the main core of resistance to more adequate management of alcohol related problems. In a few instances senior internists and surgeons at prominent voluntary hospitals told me that they just didn't accept the view that alcoholism was a chronic disease any more than "prostitution and sexual perversion"; unfortunately I am left with suspicion that (like civil rights issues) while only a few of the bolder men spoke so forthrightly, there was a good deal of silent acquiescence to this view. Those who at least paid lip service to the medical aspects of the problem justified their inattention to it by one or more of the following:

1. The medical component is small and therefore no priority exists for physicians.
2. A.A. is doing the job as well as the S.F. General in "drying them out."
3. Other patients object to being hospitalized with

alcoholics: they're noisy, dirty, uncooperative etc.

4. Nurses won't tolerate them as patients and the M.D. who has a reputation for admitting alcoholics finds that all his patients get inferior care.
5. Insurance generally won't cover costs.
6. Alcoholics never have any money to pay their bills.
7. Medicine has little to offer.
8. Beds are scarce and there are more needy patients.
9. They are professionally unrewarding to treat.

It is interesting to note that underlying several of these arguments is the notion that people with alcohol related problems are of the skid row variety; it was a rare person I met who spontaneously mentioned alcoholism in middle or upper middle class patients. Also I had the impression that for many physicians a person who drinks too much is defined as one who drinks 50% more than oneself. I could not get a lead to anyone who used business or industry as cooperative agencies in treatment or case finding.

In contrast to the physicians I found hospital administrators very cooperative, aware of the problem and often quite enlightened. Several times I was told that they would be delighted to be doing more in this area but feared staff reaction, and the accusation that they were intruding into a medical area. Administrators almost unanimously said that the climate of opinion of their physicians would have to change before they could do much. At least, several pointed out, they needed the backing of one or two key men.

REGIONAL OFFICE I met on Wednesday, October 18th, with Miss McKeever who is consultant for mental health projects and a staff psychologist. Both seemed especially interested in mental hospital programs generally and felt that assessment of the general hospital climate was outside their field. Nevertheless both gave me every assistance they could. On Friday, October 20th, I met Mr. Craig and a public health officer who happened to be with him. This doctor seemed to know something of the politics of the area and he confirmed

several thoughts I had formed. Mr. Craig was most anxious to be of assistance but was not fully informed as to my mission. He has apparently not much cultivated top echelon people in general hospitals. He agreed to send copies of "Alcohol & Alcoholism" together with several letters for me, to people I had contacted; this was a valuable assistance.

MT. ZION HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER

The director, Mr. Mark Berke was extremely cordial and

helpful. He obviously knows a good deal about the problem, however, in line with my general impression of the way things are done, or not done, in the Bay area, few other hospital administrators knew of the Mt. Zion experience, nor it seems does he have much contact with them. Dr. Jack Gordon is the physician of Mt. Zion most active in the field of alcoholism and seems to have set up an excellent inpatient treatment program. The weakness at Mt. Zion, as both Dr. Gordon and Mr. Berke are fully aware, is lack of good outpatient and follow-up facilities. There is apparently strong professional resistance against a clinic devoted to alcohol related problems.

PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL CENTER

This general hospital is in almost the reverse position to Mt. Zion.

Dr. Fred Hudson conducts a busy, but financially poorly supported, outpatient clinic that has, he states, a majority of middle class patients, and which is freely used as a referral source by other staff physicians. Admission of patients with alcohol related problems is, on the other hand, strongly resisted. Mr. Ed Dean, administrator of the hospital, confirmed that medical staff policy does not favor admission of alcoholics as such. There seems a possibility that Dr. Hudson's somewhat "avant garde" approach is not fully accepted by the more conservative staff.

ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL

The geographical position of the hospital provides it with a natural catchment area

not served by any other general hospital. A large Salvation Army men's hostel is nearby and St. Luke's provides health services for it; alcoholism is a common problem. I found the administrator, Mr. Joe Zem, most helpful and frank and he saw less resistance among the medical staff there than perhaps elsewhere. A highly thought-of internist; Dr. Sam Wolfe, is on the staff there. His special interest is liver disease; he was trained at the Thorndike Unit of Boston City Hospital and expressed an interest in cultivating new and comprehensive programs for alcohol related problems at St. Lukes.

FRANKLIN HOSPITAL This large general hospital has the most explicit resistance to admission of alcoholics. The administrator, Mr. George Mondao, told me that, while he wished it were otherwise, the medical staff has repeatedly gone on record as opposed to the admission of patients with alcohol related problems. I was not able to detect an avenue for bringing about early change.

SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL This municipal hospital admits patients for "drying out" but seems to lack any comprehensive follow-up or outpatient facilities. My impression is that there are political problems and personality clashes that make the situation here very confused and not soon about to change.

PERALTA HOSPITAL/OAKLAND This hospital was represented to me as being the most "exclusive" in the Bay area and the bellwether of social acceptability. Its long time administrator, Mr. George Wood, is now director of the Peralta Foundation which is the fund controlling arm of the hospital. The new administrator, Mr. R.S. Mason, was most helpful and said that the hospital was examining carefully its role and was finding that it left much to be desired in the extent to which it provides services for its contiguous community (a lower middle class residential area). He suggested that the hospital was actively seeking new ways of providing medical care and he felt that a comprehensive approach to alcohol related programs might well be acceptable. No physician on the staff is actively interested in this area, but there did not exist, he felt, any outspoken resistance. Alcoholics are currently admitted, but usually under some other diagnostic label.

HERRICK MEMORIAL HOSPITAL This relatively small Berkeley Hospital has an active psychiatric department headed by Dr. Felix Ocko. I met with him and the assistant administrator, Miss Margaret Beede. Both were more than anxious to enlarge their interest in alcoholism and anticipated no problems from medical staffs but stressed their need to educate nursing staff. The hospital struck me as being innovative in spirit.

PALO ALTA GENERAL HOSPITAL and STANFORD HOSPITAL These two hospitals share premises and certain facilities but their staffs are separate. It seemed quite apparent that internal problems exist here and I understand that they are about to part company.

I doubt that either hospital is ready to engage in a new type of program, at present. I was informed that the Palo Alto Medical Clinic (administrator, Mr. Ray Lake; senior physician, Dr. Ray Jamplais) was an important facility for medical care in the area and might well spear head a comprehensive program in management of alcohol related problems. Unfortunately, I was not able to make a direct contact.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY ALCOHOLISM CLINIC

The clinic director, Dr. Harry Elkins, has had a long time interest in alcoholism and runs an extensive out patient facility. Beds are not directly associated with it and local hospitals are used where possible. There did not seem to be scope here for a general hospital oriented program.

SUMMARY

The hospitals most likely, in my opinion, to be able and willing to institute a program along the lines you have in mind are:

Mt. Zion Hospital and Medical Center
1600 Divisadero Street S.F. Tel 567 6600
Mr. Mark Berke
Dr. Jack Gordon

Presbyterian Medical Center
Cnr. Clay & Webster Streets S.F. Tel 931 8000
Mr. Ed. Dean
Dr. Fred Hudson

St. Luke's Hospital
1580 Valencia Street S.F. Tel 647 8600
Mr. Joe Zem
Dr. Sam Wolfe

Herrick Memorial Hospital
2001 Dwight Way Berkeley Tel 845 0130
Miss Margaret Beede
Dr. Felix Ocko

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